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DUKE OF BRUNSWICK'S

Fifty Reasons,

for preferring

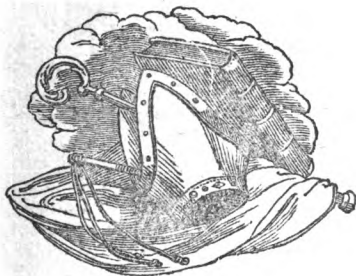
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION

to

ALL OTHER SECTS.

To which are added,

THREE VALUABLE PAPERS.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of this small book, ANTHONY ULTRICK, Duke of Brunswick, &c. by returning in his old age to the communion of that church, which his ancestors in the foregoing century had exchanged for one new raised by Luther, gives a lesson, to persons of every age and condition, that neither the concerns of this world, nor the principles of education, nor a fear of displeasing friends, or of owning ourselves to have been in the wrong, ought to hinder us from embracing truth, whensoever God is pleased in his mercy to let us know it.

It is the misfortune of too many Christians in our days, to be biassed by one or more of these unwarrantable motives, in contradiction to the dictates both of reason and religion. For since Christ has built a church for the saving of our souls, it must certainly be a very great presumption for any man to expect a share in the promises made to her of the remission of sin, and of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, if he takes no care to inform himself whether the communion in which he happened to receive his education, be that true church or not.

But this wise prince, being fully resolved to save his soul, had no regard to human motives. He considered, that a wilful separation from the true Catholic Church would exclude him from heaven; that as there were many damnable heresies in former ages, the infinite variety of sects in these our days was a sufficient argument to believe these latter ages were not exempt from the like destructive errors; and that, since every branch of protestancy pretended to be the purest part of the reformation, and quarrelled with all the rest, as well as with the

Church of Rome, which equally condemned them all, he could not answer it to his conscience nor to Jesus Christ, if he acquiesced in the dictates of the Lutheran Church, which had nursed him up, without taking an impartial view of all persuasions, and examining them by such texts of scripture as are intended to inform and guide our judgment in the things we are to believe of God and of his Church.

How any man, that calls himself a protestant, can dispense with himself from the like inquiry, I cannot understand. It being a first principle of the reformation, that every Christian is to gather the articles of his faith, not from the lips of his pastor, but from scripture, by his *private judgment*, that is to say, by the industry of his own inquiries. Now, if any one is desirous to comply with his obligation in this particular, this book will present him with a short and easy method of proceeding in this necessary search. And provided he enters upon it with those pious dispositions the author mentions in his preface, it is to be hoped, he will reap the like comfort from his labor

An English Protestant may perhaps be apt to think, that the Duke does now and then charge the Lutherans and Calvinists with opinions they never held. For his vindication, I have added some references which will direct the reader where to find whatever is imputed to them. And because Luther and Calvin were the two leading men of the reformation, I have chiefly cited their works; and where it could be done without swelling the book too much, I have given him their very words. And if these appear, on some occasions, to be rather the suggestions of a seducing spirit than the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, it will not be rash to say, that God never sent them to reform the established doctrine of his Church.



DUKE OF BRUNSWICK'S PREFACE.

THOUGH for many years I had employed all the study, pains and diligence I was able in an inquiry after the *true religion* and sanctifying faith, which I was sensible could be but one, and this upon no other motive than a concern for my eternal welfare, and a desire to know the truth; I was yet in doubt, out of so many religions and confessions, which it was that I ought to embrace. In the meanwhile, upon this design, I visited several universities; I turned over whole libraries; I read the works of innumerable authors, as well Catholics as others, that treated of our present controversies; I advised with a great many doctors touching the diversity of sects and confessions; I assisted at several public disputes upon these matters; I had private conversations with the heads of all opinions, sects, and confessions; I proposed my doubts not only to Catholics, but likewise to their adversaries; in a word, I tried all ways and means, without being able to find out the only thing I desired. This made me resolve to set all other business aside, and to chuse a proper time and place, wherein I might wholly apply myself to this affair, as being of all others the most important, because nothing less than an eternity of happiness or misery depended on it. But that this inquiry might be to good effect, and carry me to the thing I aimed at, I thought it was best to enter upon it in the manner following.

1st. I earnestly implored the aid and grace of the Holy Ghost, and with all my power begged the light of a true faith of God, the Father of lights who *lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, John i. 9. For faith is a singular gift of God, whereby man is enlightened firmly to believe all that God has revealed,

2dly. I made a strong resolution, by the grace of God to avoid sin, well knowing, that, *Wisdom will not enter into a corrupted soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sin*, Wisdom i. 4. And I am convinced, and was so then, that the reason why so many are ignorant of the true faith, and do not embrace it, is because they are plunged into several vices, and particularly into carnal sins.

3dly. I renounced all manner of prejudice, which inclines men more to one religion than to another, whatever they were, which I might unhappily have formerly espoused; and I brought myself to a perfect indifferency, so as to be ready to embrace which soever the grace of the Holy Ghost and the light of reason should point out to me, without any regard to the advantages and inconveniences that might attend it in this world.

In fine, I entered upon this deliberation and this choice in the manner I should wish to have done it at the hour of my death, and in a full conviction, that at the day of judgment I must give an account to God, why I followed this religion preferable to all the rest. Being thus disposed, I resolved absolutely to reject any wherein I discovered the least error in points of faith. For *the Church of the living God is*, and ought to be, *the pillar and ground of truth*, 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Now the pillar and ground of truth supports no error; therefore the true Church of God can hold nothing erroneous in her articles of faith. After I had thus disposed myself to observe some method, I supposed in the first place, there were certain infallible principles of christian faith, in which all christian societies, how different soever, must necessarily agree, and which no christian can deny without incurring the guilt of blasphemy, impiety and atheism. Afterwards I laid down principles, agreeable to the reason of mankind, and consulted by every man of sense, when he is to make his choice in the concerns of this life.

The principles agreed upon by all christian societies are such as these;

1. There is one God.

2. This God is a most perfect Being, essentially comprehending in itself all perfections, without the least mixture of a defect.

3. From hence it follows, that he is essentially true, so that he can neither deceive nor be deceived, nor speak an untruth, nor reveal a thing otherwise than he knows it, nor know it otherwise than it is in itself. Insomuch that by his nature he is true both in his knowledge and in his word.

4. God is Almighty. *With God all things are possible*, St. Matt. xix. 26. *With God nothing shall be impossible*, St. Luke i. 37. Though this surpasses the understanding of men and angels.

5. God is faithful without any injustice. *All his ways are judgment: God is faithful, and without any iniquity, he is just and right*, Deut. xxxii. 4.

6. God is immutable. *God is not a man, that he may lie, nor as the Son of Man that he may be changed*, Numb. xxiii. 19. *With whom is no variation nor shadow of change*, St. James i. 17. By consequence, all that God reveals is true and possible at the same time; he has a power and a will to effect, and infallibly will effect whatsoever he promises.

7. God is most wise. *His wisdom is infinite*, Psalm cxlvii. 5.

8. God is infinitely merciful. *The Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in mercy and truth*. Exod. xxxiv. 6. *The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy*, Psalm cxix. 64.

9. God is just. He rewards the good, and punishes the wicked. *The Lord is just in all his ways*, Psalm cxlv. 17. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*. Heb. xi. 6.

10. God is essentially holiness, goodness and benignity in perfection. *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts*, Isa. vi. 3. He is holy not only in himself, but

he is also *holy in all his works*, Psal. cxlv, 17. It is certain therefore, and unquestionable, that whatever doctrine contains any thing repugnant to these divine perfections is altogether false: and that what sect soever holds any such doctrine for a rule of faith, is erroneous, and by consequence is absolutely to be rejected, and ought not to be a subject of deliberation.

11. Man has but one soul, which will be eternally either damned or saved. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* St. Matt. xvi. 26.

12. Eternity knows no end. The course of it is perpetual. It is a series of unlimited time, and a number of innumerable ages to come.

13. There is no comparison between things infinite and those that are not so. O! the happiness of the eternity of the saints! O! the unhappiness of that of the damned! One of these two eternities waits for us. Without a true faith I shall never attain the eternity of the saints; and if I do not attain it, the eternity of the damned must be my lot.



RULES OF PRUDENCE,

which are to be followed

CHIEFLY IN THE CHOICE OF THINGS OF THE
UTMOST IMPORTANCE.

IN the estimation and choice of things, a man is always to prefer better to worse; and by a stronger reason, to what is bad; and so things certain, to doubtful and uncertain; true, to false; permanent, to transitory; eternal, to temporal; and such as are grounded in reason, to others that hold no correspondence with it.

2. To attain to our last end, the only object of our just desires, the means we use must be proportionable ; and of these, the certain, must take place of those that are less certain, or altogether uncertain.

3. Among the means to acquire eternal salvation, those by which many persons have undoubtedly acquired it, are more secure than those by which it is not evident that any man was ever saved.

4. Again, the means, which reason and the authority of persons eminent for wisdom, virtue and sanctity prescribe, in order to eternal salvation, or which the Holy Ghost himself prescribes, are more secure than those that have only the recommendation of flesh and blood, of the world, and of disorderly and licentious men ; for, *it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing*, John vi. 64. *For they that are after the flesh, mind the things of the flesh : and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded, is death : but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace : because the carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God.—So then, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God*, Rom. viii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Upon these principles and rules of prudence, I began the following considerations, which discovered to me many convincing motives, why I should rather choose and embrace the Roman Catholic Faith, than any of those sects into which the christian world stands now divided, and at last determined me absolutely to reject them all.

CONSIDERATION I. The matter of my first consideration was, whether it were better for me to embrace the catholic communion, or the evangelical, a title which the Lutherans and the Calvinists in some places equally boast of. Considering therefore what the catholic communion was, I immediately discovered it to be the communion of those, who all the world over and in all times follow the Roman persuasion, which every where agrees with itself as to articles of faith.

On the other side, considering the communion which stiles itself evangelical, at the very first sight I discovered a most dangerous rock: for thus I reasoned the matter with myself. This evangelical communion should be such, as in its doctrine is wholly agreeable to the gospel: now the doctrine which at the same time is followed both by Lutherans and Calvinists, can never be conformable to the gospel: for two doctrines that are opposite, or directly contradictory to each other, are never to be reconciled to the same gospel-truth; but either the one or the other must be irreconcilable. It is clear that the doctrine of the Lutherans and that of the Calvinists, are in many articles opposite, and in some directly contradictory to each other. Therefore it is not possible for both of them at the same time to constitute an evangelical communion; consequently this communion is entirely chimerical. For my part, being to make my choice, I could not content myself with a chimera, but I thought it my obligation to make a diligent search into the truth of those things which divine faith commands us to believe: for this reason I would not declare for this evangelical state, but on the contrary I judged it ought not by any means to make it my choice.

Cons. II. In the next place I considered, since the Calvinist and the Lutheran religions could not both be rightly stiled evangelical, whether one of the two, separately taken, might not possibly be so, and deserve by consequence to be valued above the other. But here I was perplexed with a new difficulty. For my reason told me, that to give one thing the preference to another, there must be more pressing motives on the one side than on the other. Now I was not able to find a reason why the Lutheran doctrine should rather be evangelical than the Calvinist, so far from it, that I could never yet obtain the favor of any Lutheran or Calvinist, to help me to such a reason. The two parties alledge in their defence some tex

of scripture; but then whatever is cited, the Lutherans interpret it in one sense, and the Calvinists in another. The Lutherans will have their exposition to be true and literal, and that of the Calvinists to be false and strained: and then on the other side the Calvinists are as positive that their's is the proper and genuine exposition, and that of the Lutherans erroneous and unnatural. In this quarrel both build upon the lights of their private spirits, which are irreconcilably different, and neither side is able to produce the least color of a proof, that his adversary's spirit deviates from the true sense, or that his own has hit upon it. The case standing thus, it was not in my power to prefer one of these doctrines before the other, and therefore I concluded they were both to be rejected.

CONS. III. I was much at a loss to know upon what principle the Lutherans and Calvinists exclude the Arians and Anabaptists out of their evangelical communion: for these pretend an equal right to the name, and that their doctrine is agreeable to the truth of the gospel, nay, that they are more properly evangelical than the Lutherans or Calvinists are. We do not read, say the Anabaptists, in any part of the gospel, that infants ought to be baptized. Jesus Christ himself says in St. Mark, *He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved*, Mark xvi. 16. Therefore faith must go before baptism; now faith is only to be found in the adult, therefore no one till then ought to be baptized: consequently our doctrine is more agreeable to the gospel than that of the Lutherans or Calvinists, who admit the baptism of infants. And thus plead the Arians, our Saviour says expressly in St. John's gospel, *My Father is greater than I*, St. John xiv. 28. We follow then the gospel when we teach that, as to the divine nature, the Son is not equal, but inferior to his Father. We admit not upon this text the interpretation of the fathers, who will have it that the

Son is less than his Father, according to his human nature, but equal to him according to his divinity ; so we think the Lutherans and Calvinists have no right to force upon us any such interpretation, since they reject the authority of fathers in the controversies that are on foot between them and Catholics. For we see no reason why their authority should be allowed in this point, and not in others.

But if the Lutherans and Calvinists insist upon their own authority, or the interpretation of their private spirit, the Arians and Anabaptists will require them to point out in express terms this their interpretation in the scripture ; because it is a principle with all of them, that "*nothing is to be believed as an article of faith, but what the scripture teaches in express, intelligible and clear terms.*"

CONS. IV. This consideration called to my remembrance those words of the prophet Jeremy, *Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.* Jeremy vi. 16. And I judged that the way to heaven, by which a great many have certainly arrived at it, was better, had less of danger and more of security, than that by which it is now known whether any one to this day arrived there. Then I thus discoursed the matter in my own thoughts. It is owned by all the world, that a great many are saved who lived and died in the Roman Catholic Communion : but who can tell whether any of the other religions are so ? I inferred from thence, that in the great concern of salvation, the Roman Catholic Faith was a surer way than any other religion, and that by consequence I was obliged to chuse it before all the rest.

CONS. V. I pursued my argument in this manner. Whosoever is saved, pleased God : *But without faith it is impossible to please him.* Heb. xi. 6. There-

fore that faith and religion, by which a man may be saved, is the true. Now it cannot be questioned, but that great numbers of persons who professed the Roman Catholic Faith have been saved, (this is a truth our adversaries dare not deny) consequently the Roman Catholic Faith is the true faith; therefore it is our duty to embrace it.

CONS.VI. From this argument I drew another. As there is but one true God, so is there but one true faith, according to those words of the apostle, *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.* Ephes. iv. 5. There can only then be one true and sanctifying faith, as there is but one Lord and one God. So that, if the Catholic Faith be the true and sanctifying, as is proved above, all the other sorts of religions are without the least appearance of a true faith; and since no salvation is attainable without the Catholic Faith, I was bound to choose that of the Roman Catholics.

CONS.VII. But what confirmed me still more in my resolution of embracing the Roman Catholic Faith, was this, that heretics themselves confess Roman Catholics may be saved, whereas these maintain there is no salvation for such as are out of the Roman Catholic Church, through obstinacy or wilful neglect. What a madness then were it for any man not to go over to the Roman Catholics, who may be saved in the judgment of their adversaries; but to sort himself with these, who, according to Roman Catholics, are out of the way of salvation? Who would not advise a man to take the safest way when he is threatened with any evident danger? And does not that way which two opposite parties approve of, promise greater security than another which one party only recommends, and which the other condemns? Who, in fine, can doubt, but that a medicine prescribed by two physicians may be taken with more security than another which one of the two judges pronounces death?

CONS. VIII. Upon calling to mind those words in Deuteronomy, xxxii. 7. *Ask thy father, and he will shew thee thy elders, and they will tell thee; And those in the Proverbs, xxii. 28. Remove not the ancient land-mark, which thy fathers have set;* I consulted the writings of the ancient fathers, to find what they would advise me to do; whether to embrace the Roman Catholic Faith, or some of the other persuasions. The first I met with was St. Augustin, who of a Manichean became a Roman Catholic, and has left us the motives of his conversion, in these words. "There are many things which must justly hold me in the communion of the Catholic Church: the agreement of people and nations holds me: authority begun with miracles, nourished with hope, increased with charity, confirmed by antiquity holds me: a succession of bishops descending from the See of St. Peter, to whom Christ after his resurrection committed his flock, to the present episcopacy, holds me." *Contr. Ep. fund. cap. 4.* And in his book of the advantage of believing, cap. 17. "Are we afraid, says he, of embracing the communion of the Church, which as all mankind know, by a continued succession of bishops in the apostolical See, in spite of heretics barking on every side, and condemned partly by the voice of the people, partly by the gravity of councils, partly by miracles, has the highest authority?" The second was St. Ireneus, more ancient than St. Augustin, who speaking of the Roman Church, *Lib. III. c. iii.* says, that "to this church, by reason of its greater power, it is necessary that all Churches have recourse; that is the faithful on all sides." The third was Tertullian, *De præscrip. c. xxxvi.* "Happy, says he, is the church in her state, for which the apostles poured forth all their doctrines together with their blood." The fourth, St. Jerome; *Ep. III. cont. Rufin. cap. iv.* "Know, says he, that the Roman faith is warranted by Paul's authority." And *Dial. ultimo cont. Lucifer.* in another place. "To speak my opinion

clear and in a few words, it is this, that we must continue in that church which was founded by the apostles, and remains to this day ;" where he is speaking of the Roman Church. In fine, St. Gregory Nazianzen, in the poem he wrote on his own life, gives this answer to my question. "The Roman Faith was right in times past, and even now it continues to be right, uniting in an amiable knot all that the sun sees in his course." Having heard these evidences, I could not but yield to the judgment of those wise and holy fathers, and so resolved to embrace the Roman Catholic Faith.

CONS. IX. I appealed to the other saints of God, and asked them what was the faith they lived in, and by which they arrived at eternal bliss: and they all made answer, it was the Roman Faith. Thus I was answered among the bishops by St. Martin, St. Nicholas, St. Athanasius and many others; among the religious, by St. Dominic, St. Francis, &c. among the widows, by St. Monica, St. Bridget, St. Elizabeth, &c.; among the virgins, by St. Agatha, St. Lucy, St. Agnes, St. Catharine, &c.; from whence I drew this conclusion: These saints, by following this faith, obtained eternal glory; this faith then must doubtless be the surest and safest way to heaven: it is therefore to no purpose to seek another.

CONS. X. Then I turned to the holy martyrs, and inquired what faith it was for the truth of which they spilt their blood, and so patiently endured banishments, prisons and all the most cruel torments? They answered me, as with one voice, that this faith was no other than the Roman Catholic. This I was assured of by thirty three bishops of Rome, who were crowned with martyrdom: by the saints Cyprian, Sebastian, Laurence; by St. Agatha, St. Cecily, St. Dorothy, St. Barbara, and an infinite number of other saints. Then I wound up my argument in this manner: It is a natural impossibility for that faith to be false, in

defence of which such an army of witnesses have so gloriously, so readily, and so willingly given their lives. How could I therefore any longer doubt of the truth of the Roman Catholic Faith?

CONS. XI. My next step was in thought to hell, where I found condemned to everlasting torments Simon Magus, Novatus, Vigilantius, Pelagius, Nestorius, Macedonius, Marcion, &c. And I asked them, how they came to be condemned to that seat of sorrow, without hopes of being ever rescued from those flames? And they told me, it was for their breaking off from the Roman Catholic Church, and for being authors of those sects which separated from it. My inference from this dismal contemplation, was, that I ought not to separate from the Catholic Church, unless I were content to burn eternally with these apostates.

CONS. XII. No man can doubt, but St. Paul's faith was truly apostolical. Now this was no other than the Roman, as himself testifies in his epistle to the christians of Rome. Rom. i. 11, 12. *I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual grace to comfort you, that is, to be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.* Therefore the Roman faith was truly the apostolical faith. That it was so in the beginning our adversaries very easily grant us; but they pretend, though without proof, that afterwards it ceased to be the true and apostolical, which the Roman Catholics absolutely deny. For if any one ask them, in what points, where and when the faith of the Church of Rome decayed, they are at a loss for an answer; and yet it lies upon them to prove it. Indeed, did we but put the case, that a certain family was owned by all the world to have been in ancient times of a noble race, and that some one should now maintain that of late it had lost its rank, which he

grants it formerly possessed, would not such a man be obliged to point out the time when, and to bring a reason why it lost its nobility? And if he could not prove it, would not any equitable judge condemn him as a slanderer?

CONS. XIII. While I was deliberating whether I ought to fix upon the Roman Catholic Faith, or upon some other that stands in competition with it, a new difficulty presented itself, viz. that, if I set aside the Roman Catholic Faith, it would still remain to be examined, which of the opposite religions I ought to adhere to, whether the Lutheran? the Calvinist? the Arian? or the Anabaptist? And it would require much time and study, to come to a resolution; because these religions in many points differ from one another, even to the degree of charging their adversaries* with destructive errors. Nay, let it be supposed that I had made my choice of some one of these; I could not yet dispense myself from a farther deliberation. For all these religions have sprouted into different branches; so that a new scrutiny would still be necessary, to know into which of these divisions or subdivisions I ought to graft myself. For these reasons I thought the best thing I could do was to reject them all in the gross, and to return to the pale of the Roman Catholic Church, to which Jesus Christ himself gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.—That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 14.

* See the first postscript to the bishop of Meaux's History of Variations.

CONS. XIV. When I first entered upon this inquiry, I resolved with myself to reject, without more ado, any sect or religion whatsoever, in which I discovered errors contrary to faith and to right reason: and proceeding upon the principles I have laid down at the beginning of this tract, I examined several tenets of the modern religions, which are held in opposition to those of the Roman Catholic Church; I considered them one by one, and took a distinct view of every particuler. My first reasoning was to this effect. God is infinite in wisdom and in goodness; he has laid upon us certain commandments, for the transgression whereof he punishes man most severely, and even to eternity. Then certainly his commands are such, as with the help of his grace may be accomplished; otherwise he would neither be a wise Law-giver, nor a merciful Lord, did he punish man eternally for transgressing them. For nobody will say he is a wise and merciful master, who commands his servants, things absolutely impossible, as to stop the sun's course, or to touch the heavens with his finger, and who in case the servant fails of doing it, punishes him with the utmost severity, and condemns him to most exquisite torments. Now God is a most wise law-giver, and a master of an unlimited bounty and clemency; therefore he has commanded us nothing but what, with his grace, we are able to perform: consequently the doctrine of all our innovators has no foundation of truth to build on, when they tell us* it is impossible, even with the grace of God, to keep his commandments.

My second argument. God's goodness is beyond measure. Nothing therefore must be admitted in him, that is repugnant to it. Now it were a repugnancy to his sovereign goodness, before he had foreseen a man's demerits, to destine and condemn

him † to everlasting fire, and even to create him for that fatal end; therefore there is no such decree of reprobation in God; and the doctrine of the Calvinists is false, and ought to be rejected together with the sect that teaches it.

My third argument. God is essentially true and omnipotent, so that nothing is impossible to him. When therefore our Saviour, who is also our God, said at his last supper to his apostles, St. Matt. xxvi. 26. 28. *This is my body.—This is my blood;* either he did not say true, and therefore is not the truth; or else he had not power to change the bread into his body, and the wine into his blood, and by consequence is not omnipotent, nor the true God. But he is God; and therefore he is essentially true and omnipotent. Indeed, if God could create the world out of nothing, if our Saviour at the marriage in Cana of Galilee could change water into wine, he can likewise change the bread into his body, and the wine into his blood. Therefore the doctrine of the Calvinists, who deny the real presence of Christ's body and blood, is manifestly false. We shall bring hereafter several examples of the like nature,

CONS. XV. As I was searching to the bottom, the tenets of those religions which oppose the Roman Catholic, I met with several paradoxes, altogether incredible, and inconsistent with common sense and reason. For example, the abettors of the pretended reformation, among other errors, teach* that all sins are equal, and that no sin is venial. Upon this I argued in the following manner. An idle word is a sin, for our Saviour tells us we must

† Luther de Serv. Arbitr. tom. 2. fol. 496. Si placet tibi Deus indignos coronans, non debet etiam displicere immeritos damnans. Calvin Instit. l. 3. c. 23. n. 6. 7.

* Musculus in Yoc. comm. p. 28.

give an account of it in the day of judgment. This sin then, according to the doctrine of our innovators, must be of equal enormity with any other sin; as for instance, with that of blasphemy, or infidelity, or apostacy, &c. Now if the sin of an idle word be as enormous as any of those, it deserves an equal punishment, and must be equally remissible or irremissible, and will as hardly find pardon as any other sin. But our Saviour has given a very different information touching the punishment and pardon of sins. *Whosoever, says he, is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say, to his brother, Raca, (a word of contempt) shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* St. Matt. v. 22. Here we learn, that a motion of anger against a neighbour, deserves indeed some punishment; but a bitter word deserves a greater. Over and above that, St. John, in his 1 Epist. c. v. 16. tells us, *There is a sin unto death*, from whence it follows, there is a sin, which is not unto death, and by consequence all sins are not equal. Besides, there is a sin, which *shall not be forgiven neither in this world, nor in the world to come*, St. Matt. xii. 32. for instance, the sin against the Holy Ghost. All sins therefore are not upon the level, neither as to the remission of them, nor as to their enormity. In fine, we read in Proverbs xxiv. 16. *The just man falleth seven times and riseth up again; but the wicked shall fall into evil.* Consequently there are some sins which do not strip us of habitual justice, and there are others, which do: I infer, that all sins are not equal; and, by a necessary consequence, that that sect or religion ought to be rejected which holds the contrary.

CONS. XVI. According to the same sectaries, all

good works are* sins, and all sins are equally grievous. So that in their principles, every good work must have in itself the enormity of all sins whatsoever: consequently to pray to God is a crime of as black a dye as blasphemy; to give an alms to a poor person is no better than robbing him of what he has; and to restore ill gotten goods to the right owner, is as blameable as to keep them against his will. What a pretence is this!

CONS. XVII. To press this argument a little farther, I would gladly know what any of their preachers would advise a man to do, that should ask him, whether or no he were obliged, in the last case above mentioned, to restitution? If he answers in the affirmative, the unjust possessor may ask him again, whether it be a good work to restore another's goods? If he says it is; the other may reply unto him; you hold that all good works are sins, and again, that all sins are equal in themselves; so that, whether I restore or retain my neighbour's goods, it is all one, as to the guilt of sin; I will therefore keep for my own use and benefit, what I hold to the prejudice of my neighbour. Upon a serious examination of these two points, I judged them to be equally impertinent and extravagant, as likewise the sects that teach them.

CONS. XVIII. God is the sovereign sanctity, whence we must infer, he is infinitely distant from all sin, and hates it above all things. If this be so, it is not his will, nor his command that we commit it, neither can it in any manner be imputed to him. It follows then, that God is neither the author nor the cause of sin, by willing, or suggesting, or effecting, or commanding, or working it; or by directing to it the im-

* Luther in cap. 3. Gal. tom. 5. fol. 363. *Adversus Execr. Ant. tom. 2. fol. 1100, Opus bonum optime factum, est veniale peccatum.*

pious designs of the wicked, as the Calvinists teach and as Luther† himself would have us believe.

Cons. XIX. I read over and over again, with possible attention, several historians, as well politic as ecclesiastical, as likewise the annals of a great many nations, to find, if, before the fifteenth century there was any where mention made of the Luther or Calvinist doctrine, or of the other sects of the our days. For the same end, I likewise perused great many ancient writings and records of the memorable transactions that happened in each century but without finding the least mark or footstep of them. This made me conclude that these religions were all new, and consequently far short of being apostolical; since they were not left to us by our Saviour, nor by his apostles, but newly forged in the freakish heads of their authors, which gave me just reason to reject them.

Cons. XX. It came to my mind, how I read in my youth the book of a Calvinist which he called a journal, wherein he attempted to prove, by a long muster-roll of his own invention, that ever since our Saviour's time, there were some in every age that held the doctrine of Luther and Calvin. But this vain attempt had no influence upon me, for the fa

* Calvin Instit. l. 3. cap. 23. n. 7. Nec absurdum, deri debet quod dico, Deum non modo primi hominis casum, & in eo posterorum ruinam, prævidisse; & arbitrio quoque suo dispensasse. Idem docet. n. 8, & de æterna Dei Prædest. Opusc. p. 906. & Beza Exp. de la Foi chez Riv. 560. ch. 2 & 3.

† Luther de Serv. Arbitr. tom. 2. fol. 429, Dicitur Deum in nobis operari bona & mala, nosque mera necessitate passiva subjici Deo operanti. Fol. 434. Hic est summus Gradus, credere (Deum) justum, qui sua voluntate nos necessario dampnabiles facit.—Similia habet, 445, 460, 461.

lowing reasons. In the first place, he will have the persons he places in his catalogue, to have held Calvin's opinion, as well as Luther's, so that he dubs them Lutheran-Calvinists. He might as well have attempted to make the east and west winds to blow from the same quarter; for it is matter of fact that the faith of Luther and that of Calvin is no more to be reconciled than the Lutherans and the Calvinists. As therefore none of our sectaries will own himself to be compounded of a Lutheran and a Calvinist, but pretends to be either a downright Calvinist, or a downright Lutheran, so those that fill the above-mentioned catalogue cannot pass for Lutheran-Calvinists. Neither is there the least color of reason, why the Calvinists should derive their pedigree from that list any more than the Lutherans; or the Lutherans, any more than the Calvinists. Nay, the Anabaptists and all the late spawn of sectaries have as just reasons to put in their claim to it. It cannot therefore be inferred, from any thing there related, that before Luther's or Calvin's days, any man held, believed or taught the doctrine of Luther or Calvin, or of the Lutherans or Calvinists of our days, in its purity, (if I may say so) and full extent. Secondly, this same catalogue is wholly chimerical; for the persons cited by this author, are, according to his computation, true Lutheran-Calvinists, because he finds in their writings a word or two, or, at most, a proposition, which the Lutherans and Calvinists maintain at present. But, were this sufficient, he ought to have put upon the roll of Lutheran-Calvinists, Mahomet, Judas Iscariot, Arius, and all arch-heretics that ever rent the church of Christ, since all and every one of them have in some point or other held the same as the Lutherans and the Calvinists hold. Mahomet held, as they do, that there was but one God: Arius, that councils might err, and that the council of Nice had effectually erred, in condemning him; so that by this way of reasoning, Mahomet and Arius were

Lutheran-Calvinists. Thirdly, this catalogue is absolutely false, for as much as the author has swelled it with the names of persons, who to their deaths professed the Roman Catholic faith, among these of popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, religious men, and even of some who by their writings have asserted the truth of the Roman Catholic faith. And what is his reason for so doing? Why, truly none at all. He would prove St. Gregory to have been a Lutheran-Calvinist, from his reprehending the faults of priests; St. Irenæus, from his commending the holy scripture; St. Polycarp, from his holding the apostolic doctrine, and even Bellarmin to have been another, because he complains of the sins of bad Catholics. Let the world judge, if these be arguments to prove them to have been Lutheran-Calvinists. Do not Roman Catholics and their preachers still inveigh against the disorders of ecclesiastics? Do not they reproach all Catholics for their wicked lives? Do not they recommend the reading of the holy scriptures, and the doctrine of the apostles? Will this transform them into Lutheran-Calvinists? Not at all.

Cons. XXI. In running through all the heresies of past ages, I made for myself an historical abstract incomparably better than this absurd catalogue. For I found that almost all the articles of faith, which Lutherans and Calvinists maintain, were formerly taught by some other arch-heretics, and condemned by the Church; I do not mean, that any of them taught all these articles in the manner they are taught by Luther and Calvin, (for there absolutely never was any such) but that some arch-heretics taught some of them, and that in different ages. But this can never be an argument with men of sense, that the Lutheran or Calvinist doctrine had a being before Luther or Calvin. It only proves, and this indeed by a fair consequence, that the religion broached by Luther and Calvin is a complication of divers ancient

condemned heresies, somewhat resembling the beggar's coat, which he finds among the brokers made up of party-coloured rags and patches, with some new shreds of cloth, of a color and quality altogether disproportioned.

Cons. XXII. Next I took into consideration the marks of the true Church of Christ, viz. that it is *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolical*; but not one of them could I find in those reformed, or to give them their proper names, deformed churches. As for *unity*, there is nothing of it; for their adherents are at variance upon several of the chief articles of faith; and even those of the same denomination run into sentiments and opinions directly opposite. They are no less strangers to *holiness*, which as David, Psal. xxxvii. 27. observes, directs us to *flee from evil, and do the thing that is good*, whereas these religions are so far from teaching us to decline evil by the observance of God's commandments; that on the contrary they declare it a thing impossible to observe them: and instead of exhorting us to well-doing, they teach us that good works* are no ways helpful towards the gaining of salvation, and, what is yet worse, they say that good works† are downright sins. Besides that, they cannot name so much as one person of sanctity that was of their religion. They are equally at a loss how to prove their Church *catholic* or *universal*; for their faith has never been spread throughout the world, as the Roman has, according to that of the apostle, Rom. x. 18. *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

* Luther de Servo Arbitr. tom. 2. fol. 433. Si bonum operarentur propter regnum obtinendum, nunquam obtinerent.

† Luth. Adv. Execra. Antich. tom. 2. fol. 110. In cap. 3. ad Gal. tom. 3. fol. 363. Condit. Ratio. tom. 2. fol. 26. De votis, fol. 281.

Add to this, that their religion cannot be traced back through every age; for before the year 1517, it was no where spoken of. And at this day, it is not known over all the world, it has only nested in some few provinces of Europe, which is the smallest part of the universe, compared with Africa, Asia, and America, where it is so far from being established, that it is not so much as mentioned, excepting a few corners, where the sectaries have gained a settlement upon no other account but that of commerce. In fine, it cannot be *apostolical*, because it was not founded by the apostles, nor is able to shew a continual succession of its pastors or its doctrine from those first planters of the Church of Christ. On the other side, all these marks are shewed by all manner of proofs to be inherent in the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church. It was therefore with very just reason that I preferred it to all others.

CONS. XXIII. Then I began to consider, how so many different nations, provinces, and whole kingdoms turned from heathenism to christianity: I found it was done after an admirable manner, and that such a conversion could never have been effected, without the divine power and assistance, by reason of the many obstacles on the part of powerful emperors, kings and tyrants, whose cruelty was to be undergone, and obstinacy to be surmounted; and chiefly by reason that the Christian faith recommended to them things contrary to flesh and blood, and to the maxims of the world, and proposed to their belief sublime and hidden mysteries, which the light of nature alone was not able to comprehend; and all this by preachers destitute of all human support. Upon a serious contemplation of these prodigious conversions, I began to think what that faith and religion was, and I soon discovered it to be the Catholic Apostolical Roman, which wrought these wonders by men of an apostolical spirit, sent by the chief bishops to preach

the gospel. For our very adversaries confess, that during the five first ages, there was no other religion to which so many nations were converted. The sixth age saw England converted by St. Augustin a monk, sent thither by St. Gregory Pope. In the seventh Germany embraced it by the preaching of St. Boniface, who received his mission from Pope Gregory III. St. Cyril and St. Methodius converted Moravia in the eighth. In the ninth Hungary and Poland were converted by St. Adelbert, St. Philigrin and others. In the tenth Bohemia, and Muscovy; and long before this Friezland by St. Boniface and St. Willibrord. In the eleventh Pomerania by St. Bruno. In the twelfth Livonia by St. Meinard, and Sweden by Nicholas Breakspear, who was afterwards advanced to the See of Rome. In the two last ages a vast number of provinces, as well in the East and West Indies, and a far greater tract of land than all Europe together, have been brought to the christian faith, which is no other than the Roman Catholic, and the number of converts thereto is daily on the increase. But after the strictest search I have been able to make, I have not found so much as one single Pagan nation, that has embraced Lutheranism or Calvinism, or any of our new sects. All their proselytes, as far as I can learn, are loose and debauched Catholics, who have not, in all appearance, any other motive for leaping the pale of the Roman Catholic Church, than sensual pleasures and worldly satisfactions. From these premises the most rational conclusion I was able to draw, was, that the Catholic Apostolic Roman Religion ought to be chosen before any of our new broached sects.

Cons. XXIV. The foregoing consideration carried me on to this farther remark : that God bestowed on all the apostles, and on all apostolical men, whom in former ages he chose and sent for the conversion of countries and nations, the gift of extraordinary mira-

cles, according to that promise recorded by St Matthew, x. 7, 8. *Go, said our Saviour to his disciples, preach—heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.* Of which promise we read the accomplishment in St. Mark's last words. *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*

The master builders of our modern sects, may, as long as they please, boast their mission from God for the reforming of his Church; they have never yet produced any of the aforesaid signs, nor wrought a miracle in confirmation of their doctrine or their mission, not so much as the cure of a lame dog, as a certain author tells them. How then could I believe that God had sent them, especially since our Saviour has forwarned us to *beware of false prophets, which come in sheep's cloathing, having always in their mouths the holy scripture and the gospel, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves,* St. Matt. vii. 15. Which is yet more evident from their clashing with one another, and preaching inconsistent doctrines, as Luther and Calvin did: it being impossible for both of them to have taught the truth, and consequently to have received from God a commission to reform his church, since the one gives no better proof than the other of his commission. For which reason I judged that neither of them was worthy to be believed.

CONS. XXV. I likewise took a view of the lives and manners of these first reformers; and I compared them with those apostolical men, who from Paganism brought the Gentiles to the Roman Catholic Faith. And there appeared as great a disproportion betwixt them, as there is betwixt light and darkness, betwixt heaven and earth. Those apostolical men were persons of eminent devotion, were closely united to God, endowed with many singular virtues, were pious, sober, humble and chaste; they despised the riches of the

world, fled from pleasures, and had no other view than God's glory in the salvation of souls; as appears from the history of their lives, and from their writings. On the contrary, these pretended reformers were slaves to their bellies, and to carnal pleasures, apostates, perjurers, vow-breakers, proud and impious, and broached doctrines that flattered sense to a most shameful degree. Their lives and writings bear witness to this charge: what mortal was ever more swelled with pride and arrogance and presumption than Luther * and Calvin †, who preferred themselves to all antiquity, and their sense of the holy scriptures to that of all the saints and fathers of God's Church? What author has ever sent abroad books so beastly ‡ and full of filth as Luther? or so impious and blasphemous § as Calvin? They have both written in such a manner, that their very followers are now ashamed of them.

Cons. XXVI. Another powerful inducement to the catholic apostolic Roman religion preferably to all these new ones, was this, that even in our days great numbers, fired with a zeal of souls, undervaluing the conveniencies of life, leaving friends and relations, renouncing the honors, dignities and advantages of which they are in possession or in a reasonable expectation, go cheerfully in quest of people to the farthest corners of the earth, that they may preach to

* Luther cont. Reg. Angliæ. tom. 3. fol. 344. Resp. ad Reg. Angl. fol. 498. Advers. Exccrab. fol. 93, 109. Episc. fol. 305.

† Calvin Tract. de Reform. Eccl. Opusc. p. 781. Epis. ad Melan. p. 108.

‡ Adver. Pap. 107. fol. 451. Serm. de Matr. 1. 5. fol. 119. In 1 Cor. 7. tom. 5. fol. 111, 112.

§ Institut. l. 2. c. 14. n. 3. in cap. 17. Jo. v. 12. In c. 3. ad Gal. Institut. l. 1. c. 13. n. 9. 23, 24. l. 2. c. 16. n. 12. l. 4. c. 14. n. 3.

them the gospel of Jesus Christ, instruct them in the principles of faith, and convert them to Christianity, without any apprehension of the dangers incident to such long voyages, of the cruelty of tyrants, or of death itself, which they have reason to expect from the malice of a barbarous people; and with assurance they may be able to say, as St. Paul did, *I am in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft*, 2 Cor. xi. 23. But we never find the like among the preachers of the other religions. And this obliged me to conclude, that those were full, these empty, of the Spirit of God: for *greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*, John xv. 13.

CONS. XXVII. Again, I admired to see among the Roman Catholics, so many persons who might live easy in the world, by reason of their plentiful estates, and all the conveniencies that are used to wait upon illustrious families, not only young gentlemen and gentlewomen, but many others descending of Barons, Counts, Marquisses and Princes; I say, to see these trample on all the delights and pleasures of the world, and with such cheerful hearts to press through a thousand obstacles and shut themselves up in austere and poor cloisters; and this upon no other motive than the love of God, and the securing of their salvation. Can any of the new religions shew me a parallel to this? or rather, do not they all run directly counter to it? Moreover, among their ministers, you will scarce find one of noble extraction, or of any considerable family above the vulgar. I say not this as if I pretended that God makes any distinction of persons, I know very well that our blessed Saviour made choice of simple ignorant fishermen for his apostles: I only infer, that for Christians so courageously to leave the world, as religious men and women do in the Roman Church, they must certainly be influenced by an extraordinary grace of

God, and, animated with the true faith in which such singular graces are bestowed upon them.

CONS. XXVIII. I remember that in my youth I heard two Lutheran ministers discoursing concerning a young man of an admirable disposition, with whom I was very well acquainted. If I be not mistaken, said one of the ministers to the other, this young man will never marry. The other made answer: He will do very well, for continency and celibacy is a great gift, and a singular grace of God. I, who was then very young and a Lutheran too, being amazed at this answer, began thus to reason the matter with myself. Since our ministers stile themselves reformers of the church, and preachers of the pure gospel, and own that continency and celibacy is a great gift and a singular grace of God; how comes it to pass, that God bestows not this singular grace on them? For you will seldom or never find that the ministers live unmarried. And how chances it, that this gift and grace is bestowed on so many Papists, whom we call idolaters? For among them there are infinite numbers of religious men and women, and of ecclesiastics, who pass their lives in a strict observance of continency and chastity. Their religion must certainly be more acceptable to God, because no man can be, Wisdom viii. 21. chaste, unless God give the grace. When I came to riper years, I very frequently had this in my thoughts; and it was one of the motives that inclined me to the Roman Catholic faith.

CONS. XXIX. I read several authors, who had written against the Roman Catholic religion, and I could not but take notice, how in all their arguments they labor to prove, what Catholics do not deny, but on the contrary allow without any difficulty. But they hardly touch upon those points which Catholics hold for articles of faith. For instance, they

will bring you a multitude of texts from scripture, to prove that God only is to be adored, and honoured with divine worship: when Catholics are so far from denying it, that they believe it to be a sin of idolatry to pay divine worship to any creature whatever. Again they cite many places in scripture, which make honorable mention of marriage. But what is all this to the purpose? Catholics condemn not marriage; so far from it, that they put it in the number of sacraments. Their doctrine in this particular, amounts to no more than what St. Paul taught them, 1 Cor. vii. 38. *that he that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage, doth better.* Again they speak much of our Saviour's merits, and of the satisfaction he has offered for our sins. Very good. But what then? Do not Catholics likewise teach that our Saviour's merits are of infinite value, and that his satisfaction suffices for the sins of the whole world? Must this hinder them from giving ear to the advice of St. Peter, 2 Epis. i. 10. *Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure by good works.* Or to that of St. Paul, Rom. viii. 17. *If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.* They give us great encomiums of faith. And so do the Catholics. But may they not believe St. James, when he says, James ii. 24. *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only:* or St. Paul, when he pronounces of himself, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.* In fine, our adversaries inveigh most bitterly against the dissolute lives of some of the clergy. But how does this better their cause? Catholics detest it as much as they: but then they admire in the generality of them that angelical chastity which they preserve both in body and soul,

Cons. XXX. I observed not only in these authors, but likewise in the sermons and discourses, both public and private, of other ministers, that their main talent lay in slandering and blackening the Roman Catholic Church. And this alone was enough to persuade me, they were but ill provided with arguments against her. For when men in the heat of their disputes fling dirt at their adversaries, it is a certain sign their arguments want an edge. Moreover, calumnies are always made up of lies and forgeries. And how is it possible by barefaced lies to come at the truth? Yet this is the very case of the sectaries. For instance, they will have the world to believe, that Catholics adore the saints; that they take the Pope for a God; that they put their hope and confidence more in their own merits and in those of the saints, than in the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ; and a thousand other stories, without any foundation, but pure malice, to support them. Now I could not think it rational to ground my faith on palpable lies and calumnies; and for that reason I resolved to inform myself of the truth of things; and having happily found it, I rejected all these new sects as so many impostures.

Cons. XXXI. I remember, that being once present in my youth, at a dispute of school divinity, which was held among the Calvinists, one of the audience, more knowing than the rest, proposed before all the company, in the person of a Catholic, an argument, which so gruelled the professor, that it quite silenced him for a time. Then to get clear of it, as well as he could, he told us, that, being formerly in England, he had proposed the same difficulty to one of their doctors, who had no other answer to give him than that no pertinent solution could be made to the argument, and by consequence that in this point no direct answer was to be given to Catholics, but the only way was to avoid the force and

dint of it, by some logical evasion. This answer did not a little scandalize me: for it is not by quirks and shuffles that satisfaction can be given to any argument, nor that the knowledge of any truth can be acquired. So that I judged the sectaries took not much to heart the truth of matters, concerning articles of faith.

Cons. XXXII. I observed likewise another particular, which gave me a most violent presumption of the falsity of all the sects that have separated from the Roman Catholic Church. Though they continually refer Catholics to the holy scripture; as for themselves, they treat it as they think fit. Sometimes they reject whole books of it, at other times they dress it out in a false * translation, and all of them expound it to their own fancies, and make it chime to the suggestions of their private spirits. On the contrary, the Roman Catholics have all the same version, all make use of the same books, which the church has used for above thirteen hundred years; and they understand them not according to their own private lights, but according to the sense of the ancient fathers, and of the universal church, to which our blessed Saviour refers us in these words, *If he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen and a publican*, Matt. xviii. 17.

Cons. XXXIII. That nothing might pass me without being examined, I attentively perused Luther's little Catechism, which the Lutherans of Hungary make use of to this day. I carefully compared it with the Catechism of the same Luther printed at Wittemberg in 1567, and I found that in several

* Concerning false translations in the English Bible, see a Book called, *The true Church of Christ*, part 1. p. 157. And Ward's Errata to the Protestant Bible.

articles it differed as much as could be from the first edition of the same Catechism, printed at Wittemberg. I should never have imagined so great an alteration, had I not remarked how the pretended reformers of our days alter, as the fancy takes them, the articles of their religion; so that some are held in some countries, which are denied in others; some stifled in this age, which were broached in the last; and others broached in this, which were not so much as dreamt of in the last. If any man questions what I say concerning these two Catechisms, I desire he would compare them, which may easily be done, since the Catechism of Wittemberg was reprinted in 1701, at Tirnau in Hungary. On the contrary, in my travels through several catholic provinces, I found no difference among them, as to articles of faith, but rather an exact conformity.

CONS. XXXIV. Having therefore met with so unaccountable a variety, as to matters of faith, among those that would be thought to follow the Augsburg Confession, I resolved to read it with all possible attention. I procured several editions and those of different times, but I found them so altered and inconsistent, that I was not able to discover which of them was the genuine; and no wonder, since the very professors of Lutheran universities are at variance about the matter. I labored under this uncertainty till I had the good fortune, when at Vienna, to be admitted one day with a great many more into the emperor's library. There, among other rarities, his Imperial Majesty's library-keeper shewed us the very original of that Confession, which Melancthon in 1530 presented to Charles V. at the Diet of Augsburg. It is so different from the other editions, that did they not bear the title, no man would take them for the Confession of Augsburg. From whence I infer that the religion of our Lutherans is not that of the Augsburg Confession, but very different from it,

and consequently not worthy to be regarded. But why was I not contented at least with the original itself? Because it contained a great many lies and palpable contradictions, as Cardinal Pazman hath clearly proved in his learned work, called *Kasauz* from page 415 to 440.

CONS. XXXV. Having very frequently meditated on those words of our Saviour, Matt. vii. 13, 14. *Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat, because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* And Luke xii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate.* I say having very frequently considered these words, easily perceived the religious contrary to that of the Roman Catholics, were not this strait gate which leadeth unto life; but that they were the wide gate that leadeth to destruction. For according to their doctrine * it is sufficient to the gaining of eternal life, to believe oneself predestinated to glory, and that he shall be saved. Now certainly this doctrine can never be reconciled with that of our blessed Saviour and his apostles. For, when one asked Jesus Christ, Matt. xix. 16, 17. *Good Master, what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* He answered, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* Whereas our sectaries, had the question been put to them, would not have said, if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments, for that they judge impossible; but rather, if thou wilt enter into life, only believe that Jesus Christ has fulfilled for thee the commandments of God the Father. Th

* Calv. Instit. l. 3. c. 2. n. 16, & 24. Antid. Contrid. in Scss. 6. cap. 13, 14. Beza Expos. de la Foy, c. cenc. 1.

Jews, touched with St. Peter's sermon, asked, *What shall we do?* Acts ii. 37, 38. And St. Peter answered, *Do penance*, as our Saviour himself had said before, Luke xiii. 3. *Except ye do penance ye shall all likewise perish.* And St. Peter again, Acts iii. 19. *Do penance therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* In the same manner did St. John the Baptist begin his preaching, Matt. iii. 2. and 8. *Do penance.—Bring forth therefore worthy fruits of penance.* But what would our new gossellers answer, were they asked by any one, whether and in what manner penance ought to be done? They would tell him, “only believe thy sins are pardoned thee through the merits of Jesus Christ, and that is sufficient.” But shall I put this other question to them, am I obliged to forgive my enemy the injuries he has done me, if I would have God to forgive me my sins? what would they answer then? Nothing else I suppose, but that it is enough for me to believe that my sins are forgiven. And yet our Saviour has declared, Matt. vi. 14, 15. *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* I ask farther, whether by good works I may merit eternal life? They will answer me in the negative, and that it is faith alone that gains it. Yet St. Peter, 2 Peter i. 10. exhorts us *by good works to make our calling and election sure.* And St. Paul tells us, Rom. ii. 6. 10. that God will render to every man according to his deeds.—*Glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good.* And, 1 Cor. iii. 8. that *every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor.* Another question may be, whether I can rescue myself from the punishment due to my sins, by giving alms? since our Saviour says, Luke xi. 41. *Give alms of such things as you have: and behold, all things are clean unto you.* And the prophet Daniel, iv. 27. *Redeem*

thy sins by alms, and thy iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor. They will tell me, pursuant to their groundless system, that it is not necessary, only believe that our Saviour has satisfied for you, and you will be without spot or blemish: only believe that Jesus Christ died for you, and you will get clear of your sins. Faith alone will do your work. Lastly, I desire to know what those sins are which damn a soul and exclude it from the glory of heaven? St. Paul answers, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. *Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* But our reformers, with their patriarch Luther*, will assure me, *that no sin but incredulity damns a man.* I appeal to the common sense and reason of mankind, if this be not a new, and wide, and spacious way: and consequently, a way by which never any man went to heaven.

CONS. XXXVI. On occasion of this controversy, viz. *Whether faith alone will suffice to save a man:* for the support of which principle Luther sacrilegiously corrupted the text of St. Paul, Rom. iii. 38. *We conclude that a man is justified by faith, and read by faith alone;* I began to suspect the sectaries might use the like deceit in other texts of holy scripture. I therefore resolved to inform myself as to this particular, and I soon found there was but too much reason for my suspicion. The same Luther coming to that text of St. Peter, cited in a foregoing

* Baptizatus etiam volens non potest perdere salutem suam quantiscunque peccatis, nisi nolit credere: nulla enim peccata eum possunt damnare, nisi sola incredulitas, Cap. Bap. tom. 2. fol. 74. Similia docet, contra Cathar. tom. 2. fol. 136. & Postilla in Dom. 8 post Trin.

consideration, 2 Pet. i. 10. *Give diligence by good works to make your calling and election sure*, entirely omits in his translation those words, *by good works*, because they evidently condemn his error concerning the usefulness of good works in order to salvation. We read in St. Matt. xxvi. 26. and St. Mark xiv. 22. *Hoc est corpus meum*, *This is my body*: but to shut out of the eucharist the real presence of Christ's body, the generality of the Calvinists read it thus, *Hic est corpus meum*, *Here is my body*. For the same reason, instead of those words in St. John vi. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven*, they have translated, *I am the lifegiving bread*, that the text might the more easily be understood of common bread. The Roman Catholics prove the sacrament of penance, not only from St. James's epistle, ch. v. 16. *Confess your faults one to another*, *Confitemini ergo alterutrum peccata vestra*: but also very clearly from St. Matt. xvi. 19. and St. John xx. 23. The reformers, to get clear of sacramental confession, instead of saying with St. James, *Confitemini ergo alterutrum peccata vestra*, say, *Confitemini peccata vestra ad invicem*. *Confess the sins you have committed against each other*. St. Paul, Heb. xiii. 3. declares *Marriage honorable in all*, *Honorabile connubium in omnibus*. The reformers translate it, *Marriage honorable among all*, *Honorabile connubium inter omnes*, to give a sanction to the marriages of priests. Jesus Christ says, Matt. xxv. 34, 35. *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger, and ye took me in, &c.* Luther, in his translation, omits *for*; because he knew that Catholics proved from hence good works to be meritorious of eternal life. I omit a great many other forgeries of the like nature, which convinced me that the heads of all our new sects taught not

the way of God in truth, but that they tortured the holy scripture to make it speak their own private sense, and clipped it as they thought convenient. How therefore could I think it prudent to adhere to their religion?

CONS. XXXVII. After this, I made a kind of scrutiny towards a discovery of the true church of Jesus Christ, from those that falsely pretended to be so; and I did it in this manner. There is somewhere in the christian world a true church of Jesus Christ. All religions and sects admit this proposition, excepting those heretics who are called *Expectants*. If there be a true church of Jesus Christ, it must have been founded by Jesus Christ himself; and consequently according to the principles of wisdom, since her Founder is the Eternal Wisdom itself. Now if this church was *wisely* founded, she was founded in such a manner as to be sure of a constant and perpetual being, pursuant to that maxim of our Saviour, Matt. vii. 24, 25. *Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.* And it is of this house our Saviour speaks, when he says, Matt. xvi. 18. *Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* If she stand on so firm a foundation, it is not possible for her to fall, either by the rains of affliction, the torrents of persecutions, or the winds of heresies; otherwise we must say, it was built on sand and not on a rock; and if it cannot fall, it must always have been visible; besides that, it would have been to no purpose for our Saviour to have given this rule to his faithful, Matt. xviii. 17. *Tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen and a publican.* For how can the faith-

ful tell or propose a thing to a church invisible and no where to be found? If she was visible to all the faithful, her limits must have been extended by the apostles after the ascension of Jesus Christ, pursuant to those orders he gave them, Mark xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* Which they faithfully complied with, as we learn from the same evangelist, Mark xvi. 20. *And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* Now since the apostles carried the faith on all sides, and the truth was preached through all the world, the church was certainly *universal*, that is to say, *catholic*; and if universal, she was likewise *one*. For which reason we are told, John x. 16. *There shall be one fold*; Rom. xii. 4. *one body*; Eph. iv. 4. *one body and one spirit*. And, if the church be one body and one spirit, she ought to have one head, and therefore it was fit that Jesus Christ, when he ascended into heaven, should leave some one of his apostles to be the visible head of this church. And who was this, but St. Peter, to whom our Saviour said, John i. 42? *Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a Rock*: and afterwards, John xxi. 15, 16, 17. *Feed my Lambs—Feed my sheep*: and in another place, Matt. xvi. 18, 19. *And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my church—And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* Peter therefore was constituted the head of the visible church founded by Jesus Christ. And because Peter was not to live for ever, whereas the church was to continue to the world's end, according to that promise of our Saviour, Matt. xxviii. 20. *Behold I am with you all days even unto the end of the world*; he was to have successors in his unlimited pastoral care and in christian doctrine, and these were likewise to have theirs. From whence it follows, that

this continual succession of pastors and doctrine is annexed to the true church of Jesus Christ, 'But because Peter and his successors could not preach in person to all the world, they were to have fellow-laborers in this sacred ministry; for which reason Christ, Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14. gave to his church, some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we come in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. In fine, since Jesus Christ has called us to his church for that same end, which St. Paul recommends to us in the same chapter, Ephes. iv. 24. *Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*, the church of Jesus Christ must be *holy*, that is to say, she must by her doctrine encourage holiness, and among her children have some at least remarkable for holiness. But where shall we find this church founded by our Saviour, and by his apostles spread over all the world, if it be not the Roman Catholic? For this it was that the holy apostles Peter and Paul founded and enlarged at Rome. The faith of Rome was the same with that of the apostles, and of St. Paul in particular, who writing to the Romans, Rom. i. 12. says, that their faith was his; therefore she was *apostolical*. This same faith, as he testifies in the same chapter, Rom. i. 8. was preached throughout the world; therefore she was *catholic* or universal. She was built upon a rock, therefore she cannot fail: she has always been, and is to this day *visible*. All nations upon leaving paganism came into her pale. It is she that has had a continual succession of chief pastors from St. Peter to Benedict

XIV. the present Pope (now Pius VII.). In all parts of the earth she holds exactly the same rule of faith, therefore she is *one*. She has had an infinite number of saints of both sexes, of martyrs, of confessors, and of virgins. She teaches her children the way of holiness, to fly from evil and to do good, she is therefore *holy*; by consequence she inherits the true faith and religion, and is the true church of Jesus Christ; if she is the true, I infer she is the only church, and that no other has a title to our obedience.

Cons. XXXVIII. Let it be farther considered, that all the religions which are at variance with the Roman Catholic in general, and in particular, are likewise as to doctrine and points of faith at variance among themselves. They cannot then be *one* church; they were not preached by the apostles, but were trumped up a great many ages after them; therefore they are not *apostolical*. They have not obtained over all the world, but only in a few provinces, and those in Europe only; they cannot therefore pass for the catholic or universal church: they cannot trace the succession of their pastors and their doctrine any higher than to Luther and Calvin; consequently they have not from the apostles a continual succession of their ministry or their doctrine. They cannot name one saint who has been their follower: they do not teach us to fly from evil and to do good; but, on the contrary, they maintain that this is impossible and nothing to the purpose. How then can they be reputed a holy church? And since they have none of the marks of the true church of Christ, it follows, that all of them in general and in particular are to be rejected.

Cons. XXXIX. It often happens, that, in disputes between Roman Catholics and their adversaries, the question is not concerning the text of scripture,

that is to say, whether the book out of which the text is taken, be canonical, or whether the translation be good and faithful; but only concerning the true sense and meaning of the text. The Roman Catholics own it their obligation to expound the scripture according to the sense of the primitive church, and of the ancient fathers. The sectaries forge new interpretations, not only contrary to that of the primitive church and of the ancient holy fathers, but also contrary to each other, according as their private spirit directs them. And in cases of this nature I have often been at a stand, and doubted for some time which of these expositions and interpretations it were best to follow. But, upon mature deliberation, my reason dictated that the exposition of the Roman Catholics deserved the preference, as being more agreeable to that of the whole primitive church and of the ancient holy fathers; first, because no man can doubt but the universal authority of the whole primitive church carries greater weight than the authority of a few particulars, and of a later date; secondly, because the holy fathers, for sanctity, solidity of doctrine, and diligence in seeking after truth, were beyond comparison more to be admired than the volatile wits of our innovators, who through want of an extensive knowledge, and purely to indulge their passions, have strangely disfigured the church of God. Moreover, these holy fathers lived nearer the days of the apostles, some of them having been their contemporaries, or at least their immediate successors; so that they had certainly greater lights towards a right understanding of the holy scripture, than the pretended reformers of our days can boast of, who come so many ages after them; lastly, because the interpretation of the fathers was antecedent to the disputes which have of late been set on foot between Catholics and Sectaries; so that their judgment was no ways biassed by interest or passion. Whereas the Sectaries of our

days being prepossessed in favor of one side of the controversy, endeavour to turn, or to speak more properly, to torture the scriptures to their private sentiments, instead of squaring their sentiments to the holy scriptures.

CONS. XL. But to set the matter in its clearest light, let us come to an example. These words of our blessed Saviour, *Hoc est corpus meum, This is my body*, the Roman Catholics understand in their proper and literal sense, because they were never otherwise understood by the ancient fathers or catholic church. Sectaries will not allow of this sense, but then the Lutherans understand them one way and the Calvinists another; and again, the Zuinglians one way and the Arians another; and each of these hath no other rule for his interpretation than the dictate of his private spirit. To which therefore of these private spirits could I most securely adhere? or which of their interpretations was I bound to receive? As I could not find that any of them had a better reason than the rest to support his sense, I judged it impossible to make a choice: for truth, whatsoever its object be, is *one*, whereas falsehood wears several masks, and holds no intelligence with sincerity. I chose therefore rather to follow also in this point the doctrine of the catholic church, because it offered me the best security.

CONS. XLI. For the more perfect discovery of the truth I sought after, I resolved to read the most celebrated authors of both parties, that I might be able to judge how far their doctrine agreed with that of the holy fathers of the primitive church, and whether in all points they agreed among themselves; and therefore I perused a great many books written by Roman Catholics of divers nations, as well Spaniards, Italians, Flanderkins, and English; as Germans, Polanders, and Hungarians; and the issue of this

enquiry was, that I found a perfect harmony among them as to points of faith, and their deference to the ancient fathers. It was a matter of admiration to me that their schoolmen, who widely differed in opinion as to other subjects, should all as with one voice profess, maintain, and teach the very same as to what concerns the articles of faith. I observed the like in the writings of the ancient holy fathers, though they lived and writ in times and places very distant from one other, as Ignatius and Chrysostome, at Antioch; Athanasius and Telesphorus, at Alexandria; Macarius and Cyril, at Jerusalem; Proclus, at Constantinople; Gregory and Basil, in Cappadocia; Justin at Athens; Dennis, at Corinth; Ephrem, in Syria; Cyprian, Optatus and Augustin, in Africa; Epiphanius, in Cyprus; Ambrose, in Italy; Irenæus, in France; Orosius and Isidore, in Spain; Bede, in England, &c. But when I came to confront the writings of our new reformers with the doctrine of the ancient fathers, I found them as opposite as east and west. In the next place I examined what harmony these sectarian writers kept among themselves, but I clearly discovered they were mightily at jar about points of faith. It is not only the Lutherans that quarrel with the Calvinists, and the Calvinists with the Lutherans, and both of them with the Puritans, Arians, and Anabaptists; but even those of the same cloth are strangely at variance about their faith. The rigid Calvinists are of one persuasion, and the more moderate of another. The Remonstrants teach one thing, and the Anti-remonstrants teach the contrary. The Puritans maintain and teach what the Presbyterians will not allow; and as for the Lutherans, some things are held to be of faith at Wittenberg, others at Lantsberg, others in Sweden, others in Hungary, others in Brandenburg, and others in England. Besides that the Lutherans follow in the age we now live in, a doctrine they were strang-

ers to in the foregoing age. They taught and believed one thing at the beginning of Lutheranism, and another thing in its progress. What account then should I be able to give in the day of judgment, if to so many great lights of the church, I preferred a handful of inconsiderable men, who have neither their learning nor their virtue, and are over and above so divided among themselves? I therefore judged it best to set these all aside, and to keep to the fathers.

Cons. XLII. But though the holy fathers had been all silent, the very stones and remnants of antiquity spoke to me, attested and recommended the truth of the Roman Catholic faith. For upon taking into consideration the old churches, elections of kings and emperors, and the ceremonies used at their coronation, the ancient statutes of Cæsars, and of monarchs, the laws and customs of the most ancient universities, the conversion of nations to the faith of Christ, the inscriptions cut in marble, the histories and annals of all ages since the birth of our Redeemer; all the memorable facts that have happened since the first promulgation of the christian faith; the journals and calendars wherein are marked the illustrious actions of the saints, and the most solemn days of the year, which are still in use among the sectaries themselves, as the Sundays, called Quadragesima, Quinquagesima, Sexagesima, Septuagesima, Easter, Quasimodo, Jubilate, Cantate, Rogate, &c. all these things gave me clearly to understand that no other religion besides the Roman Catholic was ever firmly planted in the christian world; so that I had convincing reasons not to separate from antiquity, nor to adhere to any of these novelties that bear so fresh a date.

Cons. XLIII. For the space of seven hundred years the Roman Catholic Church has been

ST. HELEN
ST. LOWE
ST. HOUSE
ST. 8

attacked by Pagans and Gentiles, by cruel tyrants, by Mahometans, by Schismatics and innumerable heresies, without being worsted ; and to this day she defends herself courageously and invincibly in a visible and flourishing condition. Nay, she is daily on the increase, and extends her limits wider and wider. On the contrary, so many heresies, and of so many different sorts, which appeared formidable for strength and power, and spread, like so many rapid torrents, have perished, disappeared, and quite vanished away. As for instance, the heresies of the Manichees, the Donatists, the Pelagians, the Iconoclasts, and a great many more. Now what can I infer from hence, but that the Roman Catholic Church was built by Jesus Christ upon a rock, and that it was of her our Saviour prophesied when he said, St. Matt. xvi. 18. *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it :* But that all sects have been built by men upon a sand, that the rain has fallen, the rivers have overflowed, and the winds have risen, that they came upon those sects and overturned them, and made strange havoc ? And I may add, that they destroyed themselves, and that those of latter growth will in time meet with the same fate, according to that principle of our blessed Saviour, St. Matt. xv. 13. *Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.* For these reasons I chose rather to take shelter in the house which was built upon a rock, than in that which was built on the sand, and threatened me with its approaching ruin.

CONS. XLIV. I have frequently with great attention viewed the libraries both of Catholics and Sectaries, and in those of the Catholics I observed three sorts of books placed into many cells or classes of a considerable length, of which books I could not find the least appearance in the libraries of Sectaries. The first class of these Catholic books had for its title, *The Lives of Saints.* Great numbers there

were of them of every state, among the rest an infinity of holy virgins ; there were also the histories of holy widows, bishops, hermits, religious of both sexes, martyrs, apostolical men, saintly kings and other holy confessors ; whose lives contained their admirable and heroic virtues, their innocence and godly conversation, their piety towards God, and charity towards their neighbours, and all the perfections of a christian life. I thought, and thought again of what I saw, and my reason told me, that that must certainly be the true religion, which abounded with so many virtuous persons : for we are told, St. Matt. vii. 18, 20. *That a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.—Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* Now all these virtuous persons, said I to myself, lived and died in the Roman Catholic Faith ; what then can I infer, but that this is the true faith ?

The second class of these books was entitled, *Spiritual Books*, which abounded with solid doctrine concerning the exercise of virtue and of christian perfection. They treated of the imitation of Jesus Christ, of the contempt and vanity of the world, of the love of God and our neighbours, of loving our enemies and pardoning injuries, of humility of heart, of perfect chastity and angelical purity both of body and soul ; of conformity to the will of God, of meditation on the four last things, of the enormity of sin, and of the practice of devotion, and of all other virtues.

The third class had for its title, *Moral Divines*, who treated at large of the observations of the decalogue and divine laws, of the restitution of ill gotten goods, of the reparation of damages done to a neighbour, of the use of the sacraments, and the requisites to a due administration of them ; in fine, of all things belonging to the direction of consciences.

As to the libraries of Sectaries, I met with nothing

of this nature in their books. No lives of their saints, because no saints in their communion : no spiritual books, because their books have nothing conducive to christian perfection ; nay, they are strangers to the very name. No imitation of Jesus Christ, for they judge it a thing impossible. No exercise of virtues nor of good works, which they think unnecessary for the gaining of salvation. Nothing of chastity, nor of conscience, the very name is hateful to them. Nothing of doing penance, for, according to them, there goes no more to the gaining of heaven, than the believing that our Saviour has satisfied his heavenly Father for our sins. Nothing, in fine, of moral divinity, for they hold that it is not possible to keep the commandments, that all sins are equally enormous, that the sins of the predestinate are not reputed sins in the sight of God, and that no man shall be damned, save only for the sin of infidelity. I might add many more particulars, which flesh and blood have suggested to them, and which never descended from the Father of Lights ; so that they cannot be improved into principles of a spiritual life, but, on the contrary, are the sources of animal and brutal life, of a general depravation of manners, and so many inlets to the very worst effects of libertinism and concupiscence.

CONS. XLV. I likewise set their conventicles, those especially in which the confessions of Augsburg, Switzerland, Geneva, and England, were first minted, against the ancient general councils of the Roman Catholic Church. But what comparison could there be between light and darkness ? The custom of the Roman Catholic Church, is to invite to a general council, the bishops from all parts of the world, the most learned divines of every nation, the ambassadors of emperors and kings ; where matters are discussed with the greatest exactness and deliberation, decrees drawn up by unanimous consent upon the points in

question, and these universally accepted by the faithful. The councils too are held for a considerable time, now and then for several years, that matters may be more thoroughly examined and set in their clearest light, and by this means be so fixed as never after to be called in question. But what can be said for those assemblies of the adverse party, for instance, for that of Augsburg*, which gave birth to the confession of that name? The compilers of it were a small parcel of men that had scarcely a tincture of divinity; they set about it with precipitation, and finished it in haste, and in a public ale-house too. A few Germans were all that assisted at it, without the concurrence of any single man from other nations; persons already soured with prejudices, swelled with pride, and abandoned to a sensual and voluptuous life. Few towns and princes received it, the greatest part rejected it, and it has several times been altered and reformed. When I had well considered how things went on both sides, I thought it a necessary piece of prudence, as to the regulating of my faith, rather to follow the judgment of Catholic councils, than the hasty resolutions of such tumultuous assemblies.

CONS. XLVI. The conscience of Catholics and that of sectaries were the subject of this consideration.

Conscience is an act of the understanding or reason, which dictates to us that a thing is lawful or unlawful, and, consequently, that it is to be done, or left undone: so that conscience is the immediate and nearest rule of our will. Let us then consider those rules which are recommended by Catholics on the one hand, and by sectaries on the other.

* See the bishop of Meaux's *History of Variations*, Book 3.

The Catholics give these.

1. It is our obligation to avoid sin of what kind soever it be; and God has left it in the power of man's free-will to sin, or not to sin.

2. Every mortal sin deserves everlasting torment; and any one sin of this kind is enough to damn us.

3. A sin ought not to be committed upon any account; insomuch that it were better a thousand times to die than to fall into sin, were it never so small.

4. We must give an account to God of the least sin, though it be but an idle word.

5. A sin of injustice is incapable of pardon, unless restitution be made, or at least intended, according to our power.

6. After the commission of a mortal sin, nothing remains but either hell or penance.

7. Every good action of supernatural order merits glory, and supernatural grace, with its increase.

8. All our mortal sins must be confessed to a priest, who has power to hear and to absolve us.

There are many other rules of the like nature. Let us now consider those which the doctrine of sectaries prescribes.

1. The commandments of God are impossible. No man can keep them.

2. Every one must firmly believe that he is predestined to be saved.

3. God imputes no sin to such as have this special faith.

4. No sin but that of infidelity damns a man.

5. Good works are not meritorious, in the sight of God, of eternal life.

6. There is no need of our doing penance for our sins, because Jesus Christ already by his blood and death has satisfied for us.

7. It is not in our power to avoid sin.

8. No one is obliged to confess his sins. Faith alone is sufficient to save us, &c.

Let any man now judge what conscience he is likely to frame out of these principles, towards shunning evil, and doing good. Whereas the rules drawn from the Catholic doctrine have no other aim, and are evidently designed for practice. Upon the comparison I was fully convinced, that for the safety of my conscience, it would be best to follow the rules of Catholics, and to beware of those of sectaries.

CONS. XLVII. Nothing so much displeased me in the ministers, as their continual declaiming in all their sermons against the Catholics, and especially their scoffing at rites and ceremonies, whilst they dexterously dissemble those points which are of the greatest importance in their own religion, and wherein the people's salvation is deeply concerned: As, that they are not really priests, since they have not the power to consecrate the eucharist, nor to forgive sins, which is yet the main office of priestly dignity. So that the people are shamefully deceived by these ministers, who make them believe they receive under both species the body and blood of Jesus Christ; when, for want of priestly power in their preachers, they receive him not under either, but barely bread and wine without any addition whatsoever. They likewise persuade their followers, that they teach nothing but what the primitive church and the holy fathers held and taught; which is absolutely false, as they* know in their own consciences†. They do

* Luther de Servo Arbitr. tom. 2. fol. 438, 480. In cap. 21. Genes. tom. 6. fol. 254. Cont. Reg. Angl. tom. 2. fol. 344, 347. Zuinglius Declar. de Pecc. Originali. Calvin. Tract. de Reform. Eccles. Opusc. page 781.

† A person of our author's years and good sense, would never have charged these defects on the ministers of Germany, had he not known them by long experience.

not teach them to fly from sin, nor to do penance for the sins they have committed; nor do they exhort them to well-doing, or to live in a christian conformity to the doctrine and example of our blessed Saviour.

CONS. XLVIII. In my conversation with Catholics, I observed their judgment as to bad and good Catholics; that they looked upon all those as such that neglected God's commandments, that took no care to do good works, that declined confession, that seldom assisted at the holy Mass, or rarely approached to the sacrament of penance; that ran in pursuit of sensual pleasures, that observed not the days set apart for fasting, &c. Then I cast my eyes on the sectaries, and found, that, independently of all these things, persons might have the reputation of pious and fervent Protestants. I inferred, that bad Catholics therefore were at least as good as the best Protestants; and I was confirmed in my opinion of what I had formerly learned, viz. that a bad Catholic makes an excellent Lutheran; a bad Lutheran makes an excellent Calvinist, a bad Calvinist makes an excellent Arian; and a bad Arian makes an excellent Mahometan.

CONS. XLIX. What yet forwarded my conversion was the remark I had made, that no Catholic ever turned Protestant in order to reform his manners, and to live a better life, but merely out of a love for worldly liberty, and that he might indulge his passions without constraint; for I never saw any religious man or priest apostatize, that did not make it his first care to procure a wife. On the other side I observed, that those who from Protestants returned to the Roman Catholic faith, became devout and fervent, zealous and exemplary; and that very many of them renounced the world, on purpose to dedicate themselves entirely to God in some religious state. *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good*

fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Matt. vii. 17.

It likewise seemed very strange; that notwithstanding so many texts of scripture concerning the necessity and advantage of charity, hope, fear of God, alms, and of other good works; the sectaries yet should teach that faith alone is sufficient to save us, though they meet with no such thing in the holy scriptures. For as we find this encomium of faith, Rom. iv. 3. that *Abraham believed in God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*; so we read in commendation of hope, *Many are the scourges of a sinner, but mercy shall encompass him that hopes in the Lord.* Ps. xxxi. 10. *Thou who savest those who put their trust in thee.* Psalm xvi. 7. *Hope maketh not ashamed.* Rom. v. 5. *And every man that hath this hope in him, sanctifies himself, even as he is holy.* John iii. 3.

Of charity: *Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.* Luke vii. 47. *For charity shall cover a multitude of sins.* 1 Peter iv. 8.

Of the observance of God's commandments. *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* Matt. xix. 17.

Of other good works. *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be rewarded?* Gen. iv. 7. *All that are in the graves—shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life.* John v. 29. *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in, &c. Matt. xxv. 34.

Of penance. *Except ye do penance, ye shall all likewise perish.* Luke xiii. 5.

Of mercy. *By mercy and truth, iniquity is redeemed.* Prov. xvi. 6. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* Matt. v. 7.

Of alms. *Because alms deliver from all sin*

death. Tob. iv. 11. *Give alms of such things as you have: and behold, all things are clean unto you.* Luke xi. 41.

Of pardoning injuries. *Forgive and ye shall be forgiven.* Luke vi. 37. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* Matt. vi. 14.

I therefore concluded, my safest way was to embrace the doctrine of the Catholic Church, which teaches indeed that faith is necessary to salvation, but yet excludes not hope, nor charity, nor other good works. For, as St. Paul teaches, *Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, (virtues) but the greatest of these is charity.* 1 Cor. xiii. 13. *And though I have all faith, possible, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing.* 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Now if all these truths be unquestionable, as all must own they are, it follows that *faith alone* will never bring me to salvation. Consequently it is false to say that all other good works are of no advantage towards this great end; and a more horrible mistake yet to say they are all sins, and therefore not only useless to the business of salvation, but so many steps towards everlasting misery and damnation*.

CONS. L. I observed that many sectaries, who had seemed for many years to be fixed in their persuasion, were converted toward the end of their days, and desired to die in the Roman Catholic Faith. But never did I meet with any Catholic that wished to die in another religion. Now it is chiefly at the hour of

* Luther de Serv. Arbitr tom. 2. fol. 453. Si pii bonum operantur propter regnum obtinendum nunquam obtineant. In cap. 2. ad Gal. tom. 3. fol. 232. Omnia opera, etiam sacratissimæ legis Dei adeo non præstant justitiam, ut etiam peccata sint, & hominem pejorem faciant coram Deo.

death that the soul opens its eyes into a clearer prospect of things eternal. For my own part, I resolved to live, as I should wish to die, and for that reason I came to a resolution to embrace immediately the Catholic Faith; because death is as certain as its hour is uncertain. Besides that, the Catholics to whom I spoke concerning my conversion, assured me, that if I were to be damned for embracing the Catholic Faith, they were ready to answer for me at the day of judgment, and to take my damnation upon themselves: an assurance I could never extort from the ministers of any sect, in case I should live and die in their religion. Whence I inferred that the Roman Catholic Faith was built upon a better foundation than any of those sects that have divided from it.



CONCLUSION.

A Review of the Motives and Reasons, why the Roman Catholic Faith ought to be chosen and embraced preferably to all other Religions this Day in Christendom.

TO SECTARIES.

THINK not, my dear friends, that I rashly and inconsiderately abandoned the errors of your party, to embrace the Roman Catholic Religion, out of any prospect of worldly advantage. No, it was purely out of a concern for my salvation, and after mature deliberation that I did it, as you may judge from these motives, which I shall sum up in a few words.

I was formerly of your religion, which by a false persuasion, you call *evangelic*. I have renounced it to become a Roman Catholic for the following reasons.

1. You Lutherans and Calvinists pretend to esta-

blish an evangelical state. This seems to me as impossible as for the east and west winds to blow from the same quarter. For, so long as you hold several articles of faith by direct opposition to one another, I shall never be able to comprehend, how the jarring doctrine of your religions can hold intelligence with the gospel. Things different from each other can never square with any third; as we learn from the dictates of common sense.

2. If one of these two religions be conformable to the gospel, and consequently evangelical; for example; the Lutheran; it must have argument on its side, which the Calvinist religion cannot equally make use of to prove itself evangelical; and so on the other side. Now no such arguments were ever produced against your adversary, what reason then could I have to profess myself a Lutheran rather than a Calvinist; or a Calvinist rather than a Lutheran; or, in fine, to believe the one party more evangelical than the other?

3. I have never been able to learn, upon what account the Lutherans alone call themselves evangelical, or why the Calvinists stile themselves the reformed religion. Nor can it enter into my head, why the Anabaptists, the new Arians, and the Unitarians may not with as good a grace assume to themselves the same appellation. For Lutherans and Calvinists have nothing to say in their own defence, but what these with equal colour of reason will plead in favour of their sects. As therefore no better arguments appear to support the Lutherans and Calvinists, than for that of the Anabaptists, the Arians, and of all those other sects, to which Lutherans and Calvinists deny the privilege of these new coined titles; by a parity of reason the Lutherans and Calvinists deserve not to be called evangelical, or the reformed religion, either in regard of the thing, or of the denomination. So that I had just grounds to reject these sects, as being all

built upon weak foundations, and equally of no account.

4. I knew for certain, as you yourselves confess, that a great many of those who lived and died in the Roman Catholic Faith, were saved. Whereas you are wholly ignorant, whether any one of your followers enjoys that state of happiness: I acted therefore the part of a prudent Christian, when I took the surest way to heaven.

5. From hence also I inferred that the Roman Catholic was the true faith, because without faith it is impossible to please God. For, whosoever is saved, pleaseth God. Therefore since so many professors of the Roman Catholic Faith have attained salvation, it must of necessity be the true and sanctifying faith.

6. I inferred again, that, if the Roman Catholic was the true and sanctifying faith, all the religions must be false that oppose it. For there is but one true and sanctifying faith, as there is but one true God.

7. It is the judgment of Protestants as well as of Catholics, that salvation may be had in the faith of the Roman Church; but none besides Protestants are of opinion that it may be had in another religion. This all Protestants, of what denomination soever, affirm of every individual sect; and Catholics as positively deny it. Now a thing agreed upon by two opposite parties, is unquestionably more certain, than what is affirmed by the one, and denied by the other. As therefore I desired to go upon the surest grounds, I acted the part of a reasonable man in preferring the Roman Catholic Faith to all other religions.

8. Upon consulting what the holy fathers of the primitive church have left us in their writings concerning faith; I found they praised, extolled, and recommended no other than the Roman Catholic, and rejected and condemned all that separated from it; wherefore I resolved to follow their prudent counsels and solid sentiments.

9. All the saints we have had from the infancy of

the church, which was founded by Christ to these our days, lived in the Roman Catholic Church.

10. In defence of the truths deposited with this church, so many thousands of martyrs gave their lives, and triumphed over death, though it attacked them with its sharpest torments.

11. All that ever fought against this church in their separation from it, as Arius, Pelagius, Marcion, Macedonius, Mahomet, &c. with their followers, are burning in the everlasting flames of hell. Luther, Calvin, and the like innovators of these latter days, were equally arch-heretics; so that to take them for my guides, were to run a risk of eternal damnation.

12. The faith of the Roman Church, was that of St. Paul, as this apostle tells us in his epistle to the Romans, chap. i. 12. See *Consideration XII*. And, why should I lose my time in seeking any other faith than that of this great apostle?

13. Were I not by the grace of God fixed in the faith of the Roman Catholic Church, these other religions would so perplex and puzzle my thoughts in making a choice, that I should never be able to make it with any peace of mind. For I should always have reason to doubt, which, among so many different religions, had the true and sanctifying faith.

14. In all other religions are found such incredible paradoxes, as can never be reconciled to the principles of right reason. This is shewn in the *Considerations XIV, XV, XVI, XVII and XVIII*.

19. All the religions which now oppose the Roman Catholic, are of a new invention; insomuch that before the year 1517, they were neither held nor taught, nor followed by any man upon the whole face of the earth. This is proved in *Considerations XIX, XX,*

21. These new religions are no other than so many unwholesome compositions out of heresies, from time to time condemned by the Church of God.

22. The Roman Catholic Church is the only one wherein the marks of the church of Jesus Christ are

truly to be found, viz. that she is One, Holy, Apostolical and Catholic, or Universal.

23. It is the only religion for which all nations renounced, and still in these very days renounce, paganism and idolatry.

24. The heads of these new religions were never able to work the least miracle in proof of their commission from Almighty God, to form his church.

25. On the contrary, they were a company of libertines, vow-breakers, apostates, impious blasphemers, and men of no account.

26. The adherents of these religions have never laboured in the conversion of idolaters, but only in making proselytes of the worst of Catholics.

27. In the Roman Catholic religion, great numbers of both sexes of illustrious birth, and of plentiful estates and fortunes, freely consecrate themselves to God's service, and pass their lives in voluntary poverty, and in angelical purity. In the other religions we find none*, distinguished by their birth and quality, that put themselves in the rank of ministers; and of these it is a rarity to find one that embraces a life of continency, an evident proof, that the necessity of gaining a livelihood, is their only motive in taking to that state. Whereas in the Roman Catholic religion, it is a love of God, a concern for their salvation, and a lively and true faith, which animates such numbers of devout persons entirely to devote themselves to the service of Almighty God.

28. Continency, that singular gift of God, is not bestowed upon the Protestant ministers, as it is upon so many religious men and women in the Roman Catholic religion, who by the grace of God, live not only in a state of continency, but in that of a pure virginity without spot or blemish.

29. Protestant writers, in most of their arguments

* He speaks of Germany.

against Catholics, encounter without an enemy ; while they labor to overthrow what no body maintains against them. But they seldom touch upon any point of doctrine, which is really taught by Catholics. Because their whole aim in their invectives, is to create an aversion to the Romans, in the hearts of those they have debauched from the church of Christ.

30. The arms of Protestants against the Catholics, are calumnies, foul language and barefaced lies, without any one solid argument to support the charge.

31. Neither can they answer catholic arguments, but by some evasion elude the force of them ; and whensoever they are at a plunge, their whole business is to get out of the question as well as they can, and to leap directly into some other point of controversy, and it is next to impossible to keep them to a point.

32. The followers of these new religions interpret the holy scriptures as the freak takes them in the head, and lop off from the canon what books they please. Even every individual person amongst them interprets for himself according to his own humour. Whereas, among the Catholics, the canonical books are every where the same, the same exposition, the same sense and version.

33. These new religions are strangely divided among themselves upon points of faith ; and even those of the same stamp (the Lutherans for instance) clash against one another in the articles of belief, and in the very catechisms which they teach their children.

34. The editions of the Augsburg confession, which the Lutherans look upon as the foundation of their religion, vary from each other, and very widely differ from the original.

35. These new religions open a large and spacious way to a general dissolution of manners, and to all the wild pursuits of sensualists and libertines, in a flat contradiction to our blessed Saviour, who has declared the way to heaven to be very straight.

36. The assertors of these religions make their fancy their rule in expounding the holy scriptures; they clip off several words and texts, and lengthen out others, and change and falsify them as they judge expedient. See *Consideration XXXVI*.

37. They have no succession of their doctrine, nor of their ministers from the time of the apostles.

38. There is no harmony among them with regard to the exposition of the holy scriptures. As is proved in the *Considerations XXXVIII, XXXIX, XL*.

41. All the monuments of antiquity, all ancient writings demonstrate the Roman Catholic religion to be the only one, which was founded, established, and confirmed in Christendom.

42. Though the Roman Church from her infancy to these our days, has been attacked by tyrants, idolaters, pagans, and heretics; she has always remained and still remains invincible, whereas so many other religions have perished and disappeared.

43. Protestants teach not a doctrine helpful to perfection, or the practice of christian virtues. There is little or no instruction to be found among them upon points of morality, or the observance of God's commandments. But every thing is allowed to the desires and concupiscence of depraved nature.

44. The assemblies of the sectaries, even those that hammered out the confessions of faith for the new religions, can never be admitted into a competition for doctrine, sanctity, or the concourse of various nations, with the general councils of the Roman Catholic Church, nor with the fathers who assisted at them.

45. The principles which Protestants go upon, are not at all calculated for the forming of a good conscience worthy of a Christian.

46. Their preachers have almost nothing in their mouths but calumnies, contrived to bring the Catholic religion into contempt. They varnish over the dangerous maxims of their own religion, and every thing

that tends to the perdition of those souls that are guided by them.

47. The most tepid and immoral Catholics are not worse than the best and most zealous of the protestants.

48. No Catholics go over to other religions with a purpose to live more piously; but on the contrary, to live more at large.

49. The scriptures in several places give us plainly to understand, that hope, charity, penance, alms, and other works of mercy, are meritorious of eternal life, which our pretended reformers deny upon this false principle, that faith alone suffices.

50. It often happens, that Protestants who have been the most perverse in their life time, desire to die, and do effectually die in the faith of the Roman Catholics. But we do not find that any Catholic desires to make his exit in any other religion.

Lastly. I must own it has always given me great offence, that the ministers of all these sects, though they highly extol the merits and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, do yet neglect to exhort their people to an imitation of his life; and even give them occasion to be heedless in those great duties of avoiding sin, of doing penance for sins committed, of applying themselves to the practice of virtue and to good works, by rivetting in their memory this pernicious error, that our Saviour has by his death so abundantly satisfied for our sins, and purchased heaven for us; that all we have to do is to believe in him. So that from the passion and death, and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, these poor deluded people take occasion to indulge themselves in their criminal excesses. But the orthodox faith teaches us, that notwithstanding the passion and death of the Son of God be of themselves more than sufficient to cancel all the sins of men, and that his merits are of infinite value, our Saviour will yet have us to apply the fruits of them to ourselves, by imitating his virtues, and co-operating with his dolorous passion in declining evil and in doing good. Jesus Christ came in-

to this world upon a double design : first, to satisfy for our sins, and to deliver us from eternal damnation : secondly, to give us a most perfect pattern of all virtues, and to inspire us with a desire to copy them in our lives ; as he has told us in these words, *I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you*, John xiii. 15. *Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart*, Matt. xi. 29. We are also informed by St. Peter, *That Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*. 1 Peter ii. 21.

And now I address myself to you, my once fellow-members in religion, and still my dear relations, friends and countrymen, and I conjure you by the five wounds of Jesus Christ, by his most precious blood, the price of our redemption, and by the concern you ought to have for the eternal welfare of your souls, not to quit a certain way to heaven for an uncertain. Consider seriously, what that faith was which your ancestors professed, and which the first Christian of your nation upon leaving Paganism embraced. Consider in what religion those great saints lived, whom you own for such. Weigh seriously these motives of my conversion, which I offer you with a heart that is full of a more sincere affection. Return to the way of your fathers, to the path of the saints, to the religion which has stood for so many ages, and been confirmed, maintained, and watered with the blood of so many martyrs ; a religion which all the ancient fathers of the primitive church asserted and approved : a religion, against which, as our blessed Saviour has engaged his word, the gates of hell shall never prevail. Have always an eye to the salvation of your souls. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?* St. Matt. xvi. 26. We have but one soul, and its felicity lies at stake in this great affair. Eternal salvation is not to be gained but by a true faith : this true faith is only

one, and no where to be found, but in the Roman Catholic Communion. Embrace it therefore, and follow my example in this holy resolution. May God strengthen you with his grace so to do; that in this true faith we may advance together towards the mansions of eternal bliss.

Every plant which my heavenly father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. St. Matt. xv. 13.

THE POST BOY.

LONDON, JULY 1, 1708.—Numb. 2069.

There being two Mails due from HOLLAND, and the foreign news that came in with the last, being by this time exhausted: we shall take this opportunity to communicate to the public, the following remarkable piece, which has given just offence to most of the PROTESTANTS abroad.

‘**D**ECISION of the Faculty of Divinity of Helmstadt, (a famous Lutheran University, in the Dutchy of Brunswick) of the question propounded on occasion of the Princess of Wolfenbüttel’s Marriage with Charles III. King of Spain.

‘The question was propounded in these terms: *Whether a Protestant Princess, destined to marry a Catholic Prince, may with a safe conscience embrace the Catholic religion?*

DECISION.—‘We answer, that the question propounded cannot solidly be solved, without deciding first, whether or no the Catholics are in fundamental errors, and such as are opposite to salvation? Or, which is the same thing, whether the constitution of the Romish Church be such, as that one may practice in it the true worship of God, and attain salvation.

‘Our answer to the second query, on which the first depends, is, without hesitation, in the affirmative, for these three reasons.

First. ‘Because the Catholics are at the bottom, of the same religion with us, and have the necessary

‘ faith to know God, in order to salvation. For the
 ‘ foundation of religion and christian life, is, the belief
 ‘ of God the Father our Creator; of God the Son, the
 ‘ Messiah, who had been promised, and has deliver-
 ‘ ed us from sin, death, the devil, and hell; and of
 ‘ the Holy Ghost, who enlightens us. We must also
 ‘ admit the ten commandments of God which teach
 ‘ us our duty to God, and to our neighbours; the
 ‘ Lord’s prayer which instructs us how to pray; the
 ‘ practice of the sacraments of baptism and of the Lord’s
 ‘ supper, according to Christ’s institution and com-
 ‘ mand. Moreover, we must acknowledge the power
 ‘ of the keys, and believe with them, that God has
 ‘ given in the church to the apostles, and their succes-
 ‘ sors in apostolical functions, the authority of decla-
 ‘ ring to penitents, that their sins are forgiven, and to
 ‘ denounce to the impenitent, God’s hatred against
 ‘ them, and what judgments he proposes for them,
 ‘ and so either to remit or retain sins: and therefore
 ‘ we sometimes repair to the confession-chair to receive
 ‘ absolution of our sins.

‘ Whoever believes all this, and squares his actions
 ‘ by his belief, is in no fundamental error; and being
 ‘ a christian and a child of God, and desires to attain
 ‘ the inheritance of eternal life, he may live and die
 ‘ in that condition.

‘ All these articles of faith are the abridgement of
 ‘ the christian doctrine, which is expounded in the
 ‘ writings of the prophets and apostles, and are contain-
 ‘ ed in the little Catechism, divided into six parts,
 ‘ viz. the creed, the Lord’s prayer, and our Saviour’s
 ‘ words concerning baptism, the Lord’s supper, and
 ‘ the vocation of ministers. This catechism is com-
 ‘ mon with us and the Roman Catholics; and when
 ‘ they have a mind to instruct any body in the chris-
 ‘ tian faith, those are the articles they teach and press,
 ‘ as the necessary points to become a Christian, and
 ‘ have a share of salvation: as may be seen by the
 ‘ Romish Catechisms of Canisius, and Volusius, and
 ‘ the Catechism lately printed at Hildesheim. Where-

‘ fore the authors of the confession of Augsburg say, ‘ in the preface, that all Christians, both Catholics ‘ and Protestants fight together under Jesus Christ; ‘ and a little lower they affirm, that our Protestant ‘ religion is not contrary to the Christian religion, nor ‘ even to the Roman Catholic: and this will be ac- ‘ knowledged, say they, by consulting the writings of ‘ the fathers. Which is so true, that we firmly and ‘ confidently believe, that persons of undoubted pro- ‘ bity and piety are found in Romish monasteries.

‘ Another ground of religion, is the belief of God’s ‘ being a just judge, who rewards virtue and punishes ‘ sin; than which belief no other motive is more con- ‘ ducive to direct us from wicked acts, according to ‘ what the apostle says, Heb. xi. 6. *For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* The ‘ Catholics do not differ from us as to the belief of ‘ this article.

‘ Neither can it be deemed, that the Romish Church ‘ is not a true church; wherein the ministry of God’s ‘ word, and the use of sacraments subsist. For if it ‘ were no more, or had not been a true church, all its ‘ members would be in a state of damnation, and irre- ‘ coverably lost, which none amongst us would dare ‘ to advance. Nay, Melancthon himself has main- ‘ tained, that the Romish Church did not cease being ‘ the true church; because the word of God was suf- ‘ ficiently taught in the divers parts of the catechism, ‘ which contains the ten commandments, the creed, ‘ and the Lord’s prayer, and in the service of baptism, ‘ or in the epistles and gospels that are read on Sun- ‘ days. The author of that book is John Sambectus, ‘ and the late Duke Augustus, of glorious memory, ‘ esteemed it to that degree, that he made some alter- ‘ ations in it, out of common places of John Hassen- ‘ resser, a famous divine of Tunbridge; which work ‘ is looked upon as orthodox, and as such is read all ‘ over Sweden, and in the universities.

‘ In the third place, both the Catholic and the Protestant churches believe and publicly profess, in the pulpit and in writing, that the name of Jesus is the only name in which men may hope, and whereby they may obtain salvation: and, that man is not justified barely by the performance of the law, but by God’s clemency and mercy, and the satisfaction our Lord Jesus Christ has given for us. This is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, as has been observed by the virtuous Abbot lately deceased at Doesburg, in the preface to his abridgment of the rules of faith: the church believes, says he, and did ever teach, that no person, since the creation of the world, did ever attain salvation, but by Jesus Christ, who is mediator between God and man, according to what is written in the Acts of the Apostles, iv. 12. and as the council of Trent has acknowledged it.

‘ The same christian assembly, meaning the council of Trent, teaches, that the beginning of justification ought necessarily to proceed from God, and his preventing grace; that is, from the vocation whereby God calls us, without any respect to our own merits. They teach us also, that neither faith nor good works do merit justification, and that we ought to believe, that sins never will, nor were forgiven, but through the only mercy and grace of God, and the will of Jesus Christ.

‘ Our doctors have been obliged to own, that the book entitled Hortulus Animæ, The Garden of the Soul, and the Rituals of Mentz, Triers and Cologn, prove, that the Catholics that are at the point of death are exhorted not to put any confidence in their own merits, or other means of salvation, but solely to repose all their trust in Jesus Christ. We might urge the forcibleness of the proofs that are drawn out of those books; but we shall only quote the Ritual of Mentz, printed in the year 1699. This is the exhortation it prescribes for dying persons, to

' whom the extreme unction is administered; your
 ' merits and the merits of all mankind, are too incon-
 ' siderable, for you to seek in them your comfort, and
 ' the hope of your salvation: since therefore we acknow-
 ' ledge the imperfection of our merits, we put our
 ' trust in the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whom
 ' God has given to the world, in his love truly divine.
 ' Wherefore place your hope in that merciful and gra-
 ' cious God. After the sick body has received the
 ' extreme unction, they add, place your comfort in
 ' that eternal God, who is disposed to shew mercy to
 ' you, and gives you strength to resist all the onsets
 ' of sin and the devil; and do not doubt but God will
 ' easily drown your sins in the multitude of the pre-
 ' cious merits of Jesus Christ. It is by that Saviour
 ' you shall be rescued from sin and the devil, and
 ' your soul shall be truly saved.

' In another Catechism the Roman Catholics direct
 ' a dying person to use this prayer: and in case I
 ' should for the future live a holy life, but if it should
 ' be your will that I should die, I had still rather die
 ' now according to your sacred will, and forego the
 ' good works I might make, if I lived longer. Among
 ' other directions for prayers, which may be suggested
 ' to sick persons, this is found, by way of questions
 ' and answers: you desire that God should use you
 ' rather with mercy than justice, and that he deal with
 ' you, not according to your merits, but according to
 ' his infinite mercy: the sick body answers I do,
 ' Do you not believe that you cannot be saved but by
 ' the precious death of Jesus Christ alone? The sick
 ' body answers, I do believe it.

' It is evident that the Catholic exhortations are
 ' grounded in this truth, no body is purified and de-
 ' livered from his sins, but by the mercy of God, and
 ' the merits of Jesus Christ. Which however does
 ' not exclude good works, or the observance of God's
 ' precepts, as if good works, though united to the
 ' preceding merits of Jesus Christ, were of no use to-

‘wards eternal salvation: for no man can assert the unprofitableness of good works, without contradicting the holy scriptures.

‘We read in St. Matt. xix. 17. *If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments.* And vii. 21. *Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* And St. James, in his epistle, that Abraham was justified by his works. And if any body should not look upon this text as canonical, let them hear what, a long time before, Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, iv. 27. *O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor.* Is not the giving alms to the poor a good work? And if good works avail nothing, why does St. John, at the coming out of the desert, cry aloud, *repent?* Why does Jesus Christ say, that in order to be saved, a man must *love God and his neighbour?* Reason itself teaches us, that a profligate sinner does not deserve the forgiveness of his sins, unless he abhor them, strike his breast, and excite himself to contrition, whatever confidence he may have in the merits of Jesus Christ.

‘We are therefore convinced, that in these things the Roman Catholics agree with the Protestants; and if there be any dispute between them, it is only about words.

‘Having demonstrated that the foundation of religion subsists in the Roman Catholic Church, so that one may be orthodox, and live and die well, and obtain salvation in it: it is easy to decide the question propounded.

‘The most serene Princess of Wolfenbuttel, may, in consideration of her marriage, embrace the Catholic religion; especially, considering first, that she did not offer herself, nor has negotiated to be chosen; and that it is unquestionable, that divine providence

‘has led her into that match. Secondly, That the said alliance will be most advantageous, not only to the Dutchy of Brunswick, but also to the whole Protestant Church, and may serve to procure the peace of all churches, so ardently wished for.

‘Care only ought to be taken, that she make no formal abjuration, and that difficulty and intricate points of controversy be not imposed upon her as articles of faith. It will be sufficient to give her plain instructions.

‘Several objections may be made to this our answer, which, however, will appear to be groundless.

FIRST OBJECT. ‘The Roman Catholic religion requires the performance of human ordinances.’

ANSWER. The Roman Catholics teach, that divine and apostolical traditions, that is, the doctrine which is not contained in the holy scriptures, and which, nevertheless, proceeds from Jesus Christ and his apostles, ought to be received with the same respect with the written word of God; which we likewise acknowledge, and the only dispute about that matter between them and us is, whether such and such traditions come from God or the apostles? As to human traditions, the Catholics are of the same opinion with us.

2d. OBJECT. ‘The Catholics enjoin the invocation of saints, when God alone is to be invoked.’

ANSWER. The Council of Trent does not say it should be done, but only, that it is good and profitable to do it. Nor will any good Christian refuse to invoke them, when he considers, that no other power is ascribed to them, but only to pray for us; and that the Greek Church, for fourteen ages past, has practised this invocation, which, thus explained, does not in the least derogate from God’s honor.

3d. OBJECT. ‘A Roman Catholic must believe purgatory; of which, nevertheless, the scripture makes no mention.’

ANSWER. If by purgatory be understood a purging of the souls that have departed this life, from the

from the sins that stuck by them, several doctors of the church believed the same.

4th. OBJEC.—‘Several ceremonies that are performed at Mass give offence.’

ANSWER.—To those only who are ignorant of what those ceremonies signify; for there is none of them but has a good representation, touching which, amongst many others, one may consult the Catechism of Hildeshaim, p. 45. & *seq.* As for the rest, the Mass is a figure and representation of the most bitter passion and death of Jesus Christ.

5th OBJEC.—‘The Roman Catholics are forbid the use of the blessed cup in the sacrament.’

ANSWER.—As men’s incredulity does not take away God’s promises, so the privation of the cup cannot be imputed to the laics, since it is none of their fault; but it is rather to be believed, that if they approached the Lord’s table with a contrite heart and confidence, they become partakers of the body and blood of Christ, as well as the protestants; so that, among the Catholics, the priests receive no more than a laic. In short, it must be acknowledged, that there is no where any precept for granting the cup to the laics, which only belonged to the apostles and priests, as plainly appears from the xxvi chapter of St. Matthew, where *they* were *all* (viz. the apostles) ordered to drink of it: which shews how the text of St. Mark, xiv. *They all drank of it*, is to be understood.

6th OBJEC.—‘The Roman Catholics are obliged to believe seven sacraments, although there be but two.’

ANSWER.—The etymology of the word *sacrament* is not found in scripture, nor whether there be but two or seven. Thus the Confession of Augsburg reckons sometimes two only, and sometimes three, by adding the absolution to the Lord’s Supper and Baptism; which the Roman Catholics acknowledge to be the principal. In like manner, the Protestants own, that there are in scripture more than two or three secret signs of mysteries; for, without doubt,

when the Roman Catholics make the imposition of hands and matrimony sacraments, they ground themselves on what we read in the Acts of the Apostles; that the Holy Ghost did confirm them in the faith on the day of Pentecost; and on what St. Paul says, in the epistle to the Ephes. v. 32. *This is a great mystery.*

CONCLUSION.—We are ever ready to answer other objections, either in writing, or by word of mouth; though it is chiefly to be observed, that the controversies that are between us and the Roman Catholics, do not concern the Princess of Wolfenbüttel, whose business only is to continue in the simplicity of faith, which is the best. The rest belongs to the divines, among whom there are those in both persuasions whose eyes God has opened, so that they clearly perceive that the distance between them is not so great as is commonly said. To this purpose, what the learned Philip Melancthon said, in his Address to Francis I. part iv. p. 34. deserves particular observation: “In short,” says he, “it is an easy matter to put an end to all disputes; and I hope that those who are pious and fear God, will agree in all things.” God grant they may; and that the present decision may conduce to the glory of his name, and the temporal and eternal welfare of these families, pursuant to the will of Jesus Christ, our common Saviour.

These are the wishes of all the professors of divinity of the university of Helmstadt, April 28, 1707.

FIRST PAPER WRITTEN BY KING CHARLES II.

THE discourse we had the other day, I hope satisfied you in the main, that Christ can have but one church here upon earth, and I believe that it is as visible as that the scripture is in print, that none can be that Church, but that which is called the Roman Catholic Church. I think you need not trouble yourself with entering into that ocean of particular disputes, when the main, and in truth, the only question is, Where that church is, which we profess to believe in the two creeds? We declare there to believe one ca-

tholic and apostolic church, and it is not left to every fantastical man's head to believe as he pleases, but to the church, to whom Christ left the power upon earth to govern us in matters of faith, who made these creeds for our directions. It were a very irrational thing to make laws for a country, and leave it to the inhabitants to be the interpreters and judges of those laws; for then every man will be his own judge, and by consequence no such thing as either right or wrong. Can we therefore suppose that God Almighty would leave us at those uncertainties, as to give us a rule to go by, and leave every man to be his own judge? I ask any ingenious man, whether it be not the same thing to follow our own fancy, or to interpret the scripture by it? I would have any man shew me where the power of deciding matters of faith is given to every particular man. Christ left his power to his church even to forgive sins in heaven, and left his spirit with them, which they exercised after his resurrection: first by his apostles in these creeds, and many years after by the council at Nice, where that creed was made that is called by that name, and by the power which they had received from Christ they were the judges even of the scripture itself many years after the apostles, which books were canonical and which were not. And if they had this power then, I desire to know how they came to lose it, and by what authority men separate themselves from that church? The only pretence I ever heard of, was, because the church has failed in wresting and interpreting the scripture, contrary to the true sense and meaning of it, and that they have imposed articles of faith upon us, which are not to be warranted by God's word? I do desire to know who is to be judges of that, whether the whole church, the succession whereof has continued to this day without interruption, or particular men who have raised schisms for their own advantage.

This is a true copy of a paper I found in the late king my brother's strong box, written in his own hand.

JAMES R.

Second Paper by the same.

IT is a sad thing to consider what a world of heresies are crept into this nation: every man thinks himself as competent a judge of the scriptures as the very apostles themselves; and it is no wonder that it should be so, since that part of the nation which looks most like a church, dares not bring the true arguments against the other sects, for fear they should be turned against themselves, and confuted by their own arguments. The church of England (as it is called) would fain have it thought, that they are the judges in matters spiritual, and yet dare not say positively that there is no appeal from them, for either they must say, that they are infallible (which they cannot pretend to) or confess that what they decide in matters of conscience, is no further to be followed, than it agrees with every man's private judgment. If Christ did leave a church here upon earth, and we were all once of that church, how, and by what authority did we separate from that church? If the power of interpreting scripture be in every man's brain, what need have we of church or church-men? To what purpose then did our Saviour, after he had given his apostles power to bind in heaven and earth, add to it, that he would be with them even to the end of the world? These words were not spoken parabolically, or by way of figure. Christ was then ascending into his glory, and left his power with his church even to the end of the world. We have had these hundred years past the sad effects of denying to the church that power in matters spiritual, without an appeal. What country can subsist in peace or quiet, where there is not a supreme judge, from whence there can be no appeal? Can there be any justice done where the offenders are their own judges, and equal interpreters of the law, with those that are appointed to administer justice? This is our case here in England in matters spiritual; for the Protestants are not of the church of England, as it is the true church from whence there can be no appeal, but, because the discipline of the church

isconformable at that present to their fancies, which, as soon as it shall contradict or vary from, they are ready to embrace or join with the next congregation of people, whose discipline and worship agrees with their opinion at that time; so that, according to this doctrine, there is no other church, nor interpreter of scripture, but that which lies in every man's giddy brain. I desire to know therefore of every serious considerer of these things, whether the great work of our salvation ought to depend upon such a sandy foundation of this? Did Christ ever say to the civil magistrate, much less to the people, that he would be with them to the end of the world? or did he give them the power to forgive sins? St. Paul tells the Corinthians, ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building; we are labourers with God. This shews who are the labourers, and who are the husbandry and building; and in this whole chapter and in the preceding one, St. Paul takes great pains to set forth that they, the clergy, have the spirit of God, without which no man searcheth the deep things of God; and he concludeth the chapter with this verse, For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. Now if we do but consider in human probability and reason, the powers Christ leaves to his church in the gospel, and St. Paul explains so distinctly afterwards, we cannot think that our Saviour said all these things to no purpose; and pray consider on the other side, that those who resist the truth, and will not submit to his church, draw their arguments from implications, and far fetched interpretations, at the same time that they deny plain and positive words; which is so great a disingenuity that it is not almost to be thought that they can believe themselves. Is there any other foundation of the Protestant Church, but that if the civil magistrate please he may call such of the clergy as he thinks fit for his turn at that time; and turn the church either to presbytery, independency, or indeed what he pleases? This was the way of our pretended

reformation here in England; and by the same rule and authority, it may be altered into as many more shapes and forms as there are fancies in mens' heads.

This is a true copy of a paper written by the late king my brother, in his own hand, which I found in his closet. JAMES R.

PAPER OF THE LATE DUCHESS OF YORK.

IT is so reasonable to expect, that a person always bred up in the church of England, and as well instructed in the doctrine of it as the best divines and her capacity could make her, should be liable to many censures for leaving that, and making herself a member of the Roman Catholic Church, to which, I confess, I was one of the greatest enemies it ever had, that I chuse rather to endeavour to satisfy my friends, by reading this paper, than to have the trouble to answer all the questions that may be daily asked me: and first, I do protest in the presence of Almighty God: that no person, man or woman, directly nor indirectly, ever said any thing to me, since I came into England, or used the least endeavour to make me change my religion: it is a blessing I wholly owe to Almighty God; and, I hope, the hearing of a prayer I daily made him, ever since I was in France and Flanders; where, seeing the devotion of the Catholics, though I had very little myself, I made it my continual request to Almighty God, that if I were not, I might before I died, be in the true religion: I did not in the least doubt, but that I was so, and never had any manner of scruple till November last; when reading a book called The History of the Reformation, by Dr. Heylin, which I had heard very much commended, and had been told, if I ever had any doubt in my religion, that would settle me: instead of which, I found it the description of the horriddest sacrileges in the world; and could find no reason why we left the church, but for three the most abominable ones that were ever heard amongst Christians: First, Henry VIII. renounces the Pope's authority, because he would not give him leave to part with his wife and marry another

in her life time : Secondly, Edward VI. was a child, and governed by his uncle, who made his estate out of church lands.

And then Queen Elizabeth, who being no lawful heiress to the crown, could have no way to keep it, but by renouncing a church, that could never suffer so unlawful a thing to be done by one of her children.

I confess I cannot think the Holy Ghost could ever be in such councils ; and it is very strange, that, if the bishops had no design, but, as they say. the restoring to us the doctrine of the primitive church, they should never think upon it till Henry VIII. made the breach, upon so unlawful a pretence.

These scruples being raised, I began to consider of the difference between the Catholics and us, and examined them, as well as I could, by the holy scriptures ; which, though I do not pretend to be able to understand, yet there are some things I found so easy, that I cannot but wonder I had been so long without finding them out : as, the real presence in the blessed sacrament ; the infallibility of the church ; confession, and praying for the dead. After this, I spoke severally to two of the best * bishops he have in England, who both told me, there were many things in the Roman Church, which it were very much to be wished we had kept ; as confession, which was, no doubt, commanded by God ; that praying for the dead was one of the ancient things in christianity ; that for their part they did it daily, though they would not own it : and afterwards, pressing one of them very much upon the other points, he † told me, that if he had been bred a Catholic, he would not change his religion ; but, that being of another church, wherein he was sure were all things necessary to salvation, he thought it very ill to give that scandal, as to leave that church wherein he had received his baptism.

* Sheldon, A. B. of Cant. Blandford, B. of Worcester.

† Blandford, bishop of Worcester.

All these discourses did but add more to the desire I had to be a Catholic, and gave me the more terrible agonies in the world within myself. For all this, fearing to be rash in a matter of that weight, I did all I could to satisfy myself; made it my daily prayer to God to settle me in the right, and so went on Christmas-day to receive in the king's chapel; after which, I was more troubled than ever, and could never be in quiet, till I had told my desire to a Catholic, who brought a priest to me, and that was the first I ever did converse with, upon my word. The more I spoke to him the more I was confirmed in my design; and, as it is impossible for me to doubt of the words of our blessed Saviour, who says, the holy sacrament is his body and blood, so I cannot believe, that he who is the author of all truth, and who has promised to be with his church to the end of the world, would permit them to give that holy mystery to the laity, but in one kind, if it were not lawful so to do.

I am not able, or, if I were, would I enter into disputes with any body; I only, in short, say this for the changing of my religion, which I take God to witness I would never have done, if I thought it possible to save my soul otherwise. I think I need not say it is any interest in this world leads me to it: it will be plain enough to every body, that I must loose all the friends and credit I have here by it; and having very well weighed which I could best part with, my share in this world or the next: I thank God I found no difficulty in the choice.

My only prayer is, that the poor Catholics of this nation may not suffer for my being of their religion: that God would but give me patience to hear them, and then send me any afflictions in this world, so I may enjoy a blessed eternity hereafter.

St. James, Aug. 20, 1670.

